













THE

75

# FATHER'S BOOK;

OR

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND  
INSTRUCTION

OF

## YOUNG CHILDREN,

ON PRINCIPLES APPROPRIATE TO

A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY.

26  

---

BY THEODORE DWIGHT, JR.  

---



**Springfield:**

G. AND C. MERRIAM.

Leavitt, Lord & Co., New York : Crocker & Brewster, Boston.

---

1834.

W C 37  
D 9

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1834,  
By G. & C. MERRIAM,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

1716

# DEDICATION.

---

TO THOSE

ON WHOSE

PATRIOTISM, INTELLIGENCE, SOUND JUDGMENT, AND  
CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE,

THE

PERPETUITY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS,

*CIVIL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS,*

AND THE

HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY

OF OUR

BELOVED COUNTRY,

SO ESSENTIALLY DEPEND;—

TO

**AMERICAN FATHERS,**

*This Volume*

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

111 11-2-1901

## PREFACE.

IT is the object of this volume to suggest to the father of a family, principles and methods for the instruction of children, in intellectual, moral and religious truths, and for training them up to usefulness and happiness here and hereafter.

It would be difficult, in so small a work, to say all that might be usefully said, on government or intellectual instruction alone ; but when moral and religious training are to be added, it cannot be expected that every point should be considered at large. The author has therefore chiefly insisted on such views as he thinks most need to be impressed upon the minds of fathers of the present day. Fashion has a greater influence on the education of the young than most parents suppose ; and as many prevailing doctrines and practices are lamentably wrong, the father must not be surprised if he should be called upon, in the following pages, to pursue a course opposite to that adopted by many persons around him.

It will be perceived that this volume inculcates the great value of a good domestic education ; and I trust that such suggestions as will be here found on this subject, together with those reflections which the reader will make, may impress upon his mind the high importance of a father's duties towards his children. The author has seen reason to rate them very highly, in the course of his intercourse with different ages and classes of society. He has seen men who had enjoyed the advantages of good examples and instruction at home, overcoming obstacles of almost every kind, and acquiring knowledge and influence of great value to themselves and others. On the other hand, many cases might be mentioned, where the instructors of our best literary institutions have struggled in vain against the evil principles and habits which neglected or ill guided young men have brought with them from their parental roof, and which have proved predominant through their lives.

Among the influences of home, those exerted by the example of parents are frequently alluded to in this volume ; as they are important in physical and intellectual, as well as in moral and religious matters. The father is advised to form useful habits in his children, both of action,

thought, feeling and speaking ; as the practice of our habits in one form and another, constitutes almost the whole of our lives ; and the object of education is to affect our lives in the best possible manner.

Although so large a share of the care of children devolves upon the mother, let the father be careful not to underrate his own duties or influence. There are few who do all they might for the physical, intellectual, moral and religious education of their children ; and when the importance of their own proper task is considered, and the improper influences by which they are too often induced to neglect it, they must acknowledge it is their duty to make new exertions in behalf of their children.

On whatever topics we may write with the hope of benefiting society, we must confess that a large share of all the good the philanthropist would aim at may be secured by him who shall induce parents to entertain just views of their duty towards their children, and to pursue such methods in training them as shall most tend to make them wise and good, intelligent members of society, and faithful servants of God. The advantages afforded to most parents by society in America, receive, as they merit, particular attention in this book ; and it is hoped that the

modes here pointed out, by which the good father may avail himself of the varied social machinery around us, will induce him to regard this interesting subject as it deserves.

Those who may view in a different light from the author, the duty of making many sacrifices for the good of our children, and who may think that this book recommends unnecessary deviations from some of the opinions and practices current in society, will perhaps still find useful suggestions in different chapters, by which they and their children may be benefited.

Before any father closes this book and dismisses the subject, with the thought that he has *no time* to attend to the education of his children, let him consider these few concluding lines. A half hour stolen from his morning sleep may accomplish vast things in a year ; and the author has endeavored particularly to show, in some of the succeeding pages, in what manner short moments of leisure, and even the time occupied at meals, may be made useful in education, with both enjoyment and benefit to the parent as well as the child.

*New York, June 2, 1834.*

# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

	<i>Page.</i>
<b>THE YOUNG FATHER.</b> Ignorance of the principles of a good education often arises from neglect of those who have experience, and might teach—What is your system of education?—Questions. . . .	9

## CHAPTER II.

<b>PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION.</b> Our opportunities for adopting the best principles in Education—General indifference—Ideas to be embraced—False principles to be rejected—Domestic arrangements to be made for the benefit of our children—Planning and building a house—Furniture—The influence of good taste in these points and in dress—Questions for a Father. . . . .	17
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

<b>YOUNG CHILDREN.</b> Treatment of young infants—Reflections and studies appropriate to the father during the early infancy of his child—Crying—Improper excitement—How to counteract fretfulness and passion in young infants—First step in discipline—Signifying desires by kisses—Anecdote—Early language—Importance of the means of expression to the mind—Signs—Anecdote. . . . .	27
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

<b>THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN.</b> Some knowledge of the human system desirable, and a few medicines—A good system of food, exercise, early rising, &c. best—Diet—Various exercises appropriate to the health of body and mind. . . . .	37
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

<b>RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.</b> At what age is it to be commenced?—How is it to be conveyed?—Force of example—Anecdotes to prove early religious instruction possible—Reasons for undertaking it. . . .	44
---	----

## CHAPTER VI.

<b>RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION—continued.</b> The importance and interest of human physiology, or the knowledge of our own frames—The science of the soul superior to every branch of natural history, &c.—The dawning of intellect—The first appearance of the affections—The acquisition of ideas—Errors of opinion concerning the time to commence religious instruction—A plan recommended for early teaching the fundamental principles of the Christian religion—Parents responsible for the religious doctrines they inculcate, . . . . .	55
--	----

## CHAPTER VII.

A FAMILY ON THE SABBATH. The father's morning interview with his son—Their prayer, and study of the Scriptures—Principles in religious instruction—Sunday occupations for children—School—Church. 68

## CHAPTER VIII.

PLAYTHINGS, SPORTS, AMUSEMENTS AND EXERCISE. They should be connected with something useful, as far as possible—Exciting games to be avoided—Kites, connected with useful principles—Games of chance to be shunned—Small mechanical and agricultural tools for children—The care of domestic animals and fowls—Humane feeling thus to be fostered—A knowledge of natural history, drawing, &c. to be substituted for cruel field sports—Walking—Riding on horseback—Health injured by injudicious treatment at school. 87

## CHAPTER IX.

AMUSEMENTS—*continued*. Witnessing useful labor—Learning useful arts—Instrumental music—Story of a boy who visited a fife-maker—Manual labor. 96

## CHAPTER X.

FAMILY GOVERNMENT. The knowledge possessed by children—Allowance to be made for their ignorance of language, irritability, &c.—Corporeal punishments—Punishments in general—Regular hours and habits—Dangers of young men—Precautions. 108

## CHAPTER XI.

INTELLECTUAL INSTRUCTION. Education begins early—Importance of domestic education, and our facilities for exercising it, especially in the middle and most sensible ranks of society—The father's instructions in conversation at table—The wonders of water—Other subjects. 120

## CHAPTER XII.

INTELLECTUAL INSTRUCTION—*continued*. Conversation in general—Points to be guarded against in conversation—Books in a family library—Impure and frivolous works to be excluded—Fiction—Great objects of instruction—The father may write for the instruction of his children—Learning good prose and poetry by rote—Domestic instruction in geography, natural history, arts, common life, &c.—Children's compositions, journals, &c. 132

## CHAPTER XIII.

SOCIETY, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION. Advantages offered by the state of society in our own country—Public celebrations—Training days—Exhibitions of children—Celebrations appropriate to an intelligent, virtuous and Christian people—Duty of fathers in fostering literary societies—Safeguards against intemperance and crime—The neighborhood—How to be regarded—Habits of loving neighbors—Petty jealousies—Social intercourse—Influence of Sabbath Schools, religious and charitable associations, on families. 145

## CHAPTER XIV.

MUSIC, POLITENESS, PUNCTUALITY, &c. The cultivation of music in the family—Vocal music—Its importance as a means of discipline and instruction, as well as a source of enjoyment—Nature prompts to the cultivation of vocal music—Almost every child capable of learning to sing—The musical machinery of the throat—Singing schools useful, and worthy of patronage—Musical instruments for children—False views of politeness—Good Manners—Practical training—Systematic beneficence—Example—Instances to illustrate. . . . .	157
---	-----

## CHAPTER XV.

VARIOUS TOPICS. System—Honesty—Punctuality in paying debts—Independence—Illustration—Caution to wealthy parents—Book-keeping—Public offices—Servants—Terrifying children. . . . .	171
---	-----

## CHAPTER XVI.

SCHOOLS. Their importance to the peace and good order of the neighborhood and society—Sending children to public schools—A father's duty towards them—General principles to be observed in establishing and conducting schools—Branches to be taught, and principles of teaching—Ornamental branches—Modes of government and instruction—Means of exciting interest in schools—Lyceums—Conclusion. . . . .	186
--	-----



# THE FATHER'S BOOK.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE YOUNG FATHER.

The young father—Ignorance of the principles of a good education often arises from not consulting those who have experience, and might teach—What is your system of education?—Questions.

How interesting it is to an experienced father, to see a young man just entered upon the duties of that relation, if his character be such as to encourage hopes of his faithful devotion to them! He can not only sympathize with him in the joy with which he receives into his arms the first-born child which his Maker has committed to his care, and the tender and sublime sentiments which mingle at that peculiar moment of his life; but he can foresee something of the course of instruction which begins from this period, and realize the beneficial though laborious and self-denying task on which he is entering.

An experienced parent, looking upon a young father, is reminded of the more tender tie which now binds him to the wife of his bosom, and contemplates, with reflections of his own, the sphere of warm affections in which the tender babe is to be nurtured. He recollects, however, with regret and solicitude, how often all this love has been unavailing, and failed to

secure its objects from evils of various kinds, and looks forward with doubt and fear of the issue of that training which this infant shall receive from these hands. And similar feelings are often awakened by the sight of children at different ages and under various circumstances. Indeed, a parent who has ever faithfully attended to the important subject of education, can hardly banish from his mind, for a single day, or even an hour, at any subsequent period of his life, reflections on its difficulties, and the evil consequences of negligence or failure.

One reason why the evil consequences of bad education are so often to be lamented, is, that those who have to practise the duties of parents, receive little instruction from those who might give it. Every generation, and every parent, is left too much alone to learn this most important science. Of course each must begin at the first principles, and grope unassisted and unenlightened over the ground where so many have strayed and fallen, because they too were unaided. It has often happened that parents have supposed themselves to have arrived at great discoveries in the plan or method of governing or treating children, when they have ascertained that some person, who might have communicated the same, and more, in a few words, had practised it long before.

We avail ourselves of the experience of others, in every other department of human knowledge; why should we not do so in that of domestic education, and in the important and responsible work of giving a right direction to the opening minds of the young immortals, committed to our trust?

The science and practice of education become to parents matters of prime necessity. Next to the bread, clothing, and warmth, necessary to the life and health of their offspring, the way of teaching and governing them is imperatively important.—Thousands and millions of parents are attempting the task every year, in different countries and under different circumstances, on different principles and with different success. Children are rendered, by different systems, Hottentots, Brahmins, European princes, and citizens of America, with all the traits respectively belonging to their various situations. To us it is of vast importance to learn how we may best train up our children to occupy the spheres in which we may place them, in the best manner. The world is not without books on the subject of education: we know how the Spartan mothers made their children Lacedemonians, and how Bonaparte trained the youth of France to fight for himself: but what book is to be found which points out briefly and intelligibly to a Christian father in the United States, the way in which he can instil into his child the knowledge, the sentiments, and the habits, which shall render him, in a republican country, an useful citizen—in an intelligent community like ours, imbued with that knowledge, and that alone, which it shall be best for him to possess,—and under the government of a great and holy God, a faithful, happy, and acceptable servant?

Some parents in our country have succeeded in producing a portion of these results; a few have been blessed with success in all: and as we have only to

inquire, to observe, and to reflect, to arrive at some great and ruling principles in education, it will not be thought presumptuous, if an attempt be made in the succeeding pages, to lay some of them before such fathers as may consult this volume for suggestions useful in the task they have to perform.

To the newly married man I would remark as a friend, that he is interested in making his house, from the beginning, the abode of harmony, intelligence and refinement. These are all necessary to his happiness, and have much to do with his usefulness and respectability in life. They are also the natural results of virtue, and the evidences of a good education received, as well as pledges that a good one will be conferred on such as are trained beneath that roof. Much relating to manners, demeanor, conversation, &c. may often be learnt by the husband and wife from each other; and whatever may have been their circumstances before marriage, it is generally the case that each comes with some habits or opinions worthy of adoption, as well as with those which may be advantageously exchanged for others. With proper views and feelings, the young family may be soon regulated according to the best principles which have prevailed in both those from which the pair have proceeded. 'A spirit of mutual concession cannot be too early adopted by the husband and wife, and much is already effected when this has been decided on.

But beside this, it may be suggested to the young and affectionate husband, that he has now a new motive to urge him to the improvement of his character;—the happiness of her who has generously

confided her prospects to his hands. His respectability and usefulness in life also demand that he should examine into himself, ascertain his faults and failings, and begin at once the task of daily correcting them. The better he governs himself, the more easy it will be to exercise a proper control at home, and an useful influence abroad; to conciliate the respect and acquire the confidence of others, both of which are necessary to his success in any business in which he may engage.

One very important form of self-government, is that which enables us to moderate our desires and expectations in relation to *wealth* and *show*. Many a family has been ruined by the want of this virtue in the father; and many more have been, and no doubt now are, suffering in various other ways from the same cause. It is every thing to the prosperity and peace, the usefulness, and often the respectability of a family, whether they live within or beyond their income. If within it, time is their friend; if not, he is their enemy, for he will be heaping up a load of debt, yearly, monthly and daily.

No family was ever well conducted without *religion*. If you have never thought seriously of it, reflect now, when you are beginning to act on a wider scale than ever before; and determine to introduce family prayers night and morning. Let not the first day pass without praying with your family; if you feel any unwillingness now, you will feel twice as much hereafter.—Begin now, or ten chances to one you never will. You may feel a little backwardness; but when once the habit is formed, you will feel as

backward at the neglect of it. That diffidence—what is it? where will it be to-morrow?

I could wish that the youthful fathers into whose hands this book may fall, should be in the possession of every advantage for the immediate and full application of the highest principles it is prepared to suggest for the education of their children. And perhaps the easiest way in which any one may satisfy himself how things actually are situated around him, is to recal the feelings of childhood, and suppose himself introduced into the family. Would he find himself received at the door with those kind words and looks of welcome which ingratiate the favor of children, and predispose them to receive every good influence? Or might the harshness, moroseness, or expression of indifference, habitual in too many families, check his feelings or wound his sense of propriety? Would he find the fireside and the family board the sphere of harmony, cheerfulness, affection, intelligence, taste and piety? If so, he would perceive the evidences of their presence and their prevailing influences, not merely in words, but in tones, looks, and actions appropriate. The topics of conversation, the manner of treating them, the objects for which the names of neighbors, friends and strangers, were mentioned, would all show in some degree the motives of the speakers, and disclose the standard of the parents' taste, discipline and character, be it high or low. The order of the household, the size of the apartments, the nature and arrangement of the furniture, may all convey even to the mind of a child some correct ideas of the relative estimate

in which the master and mistress hold things of real value, and those of trifling importance. If the parents, instead of indulging in selfish, narrow feelings, towards those who are supposed to be above or below them, show that their views are friendly, enlarged and intelligent, every one present will share in the knowledge they collect from day to day, and sympathize in their feelings.

In a well regulated family, where the best principles of government are adopted, and the wisest means employed for promoting the physical, moral, and intellectual culture of the children ; and, as a consequence, good order, kind feeling, and happiness prevail ;—it will usually be found that the parents have had in mind some family in which they have witnessed the same happy effects resulting from a similar course. Perhaps that family was the much loved home of their own childhood.

As the good farmer and merchant make occasional examinations into the general state of their business, that they may correct any error and remedy any defect before it be too late, so should the parent sometimes honestly examine his feelings and his system of education, by questions like the following.—To a young father, who has opportunity to ask himself such of these questions as apply to his own case, the process will be of a most interesting nature.

For what object was this child given me ?

What is it capable of becoming ?

Why have many children been less good, and wise, and happy, than they might have been ?

Might I have been wiser or better if I had been differently educated ?

What should be the character and conduct of a father, if he would have his child well educated? [in wisdom, temper, language, habits, religion—towards his children, wife, friends, neighbors, strangers, the institutions of society, and his Creator ?]

In what am I most deficient ?

What must be the influence of such defects on my child ?

How may they be corrected ?

Why do I not better understand my duties to my family ?

How can I best learn them ?

Are the interests of my children of sufficient consequence to justify or to demand great sacrifices on my part ?

What should be the principal objects to be aimed at in domestic arrangements ?

What in my business ; and ought it so to engross me as to make me a stranger to my children ?

How may society be rendered useful in aiding the father in the education of his children ?

## CHAPTER II.

### PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION.

Our opportunities for adopting the best principles in Education—General indifference—Ideas to be embraced—False principles to be rejected—Domestic arrangements to be made for the benefit of our children—Planning and building a house—Furniture—The influence of good taste in these points and in dress—Questions for a Father.

**THERE** is no reason why we should not enter upon the education of our children on the best possible principles practised or known in the world. Our circumstances in a country so distinguished by many blessings, have not been so distinctly regarded as they deserve, in relation to the advantages they offer us in the prosecution of this interesting task; nor have the public, or even good men in general, been duly impressed with the duties they owe to their neighborhood and the nation, in laboring to multiply and increase those advantages.

A state of war throws many impediments in the way of education; and still more unfavorable to it is the open prevalence of disorder, lawlessness and gross immorality in the community around us. In various ways also the division of society into distinct ranks, is unfavorable to the training of children; as well as general ignorance, poverty, superstitions, &c., from all which we are nearly if not wholly free.

We have peace, intelligence, and prosperity around us, with republican institutions, Christian ordinances, and all the operations of an active, moral, intelligent and growing people. The means necessary for the comfort of our families and the instruction of our children, how abundantly are they within our reach; and if we were but wise and faithful, in understanding and availing ourselves of those most applicable to our wants, what results might we not see !

It is unfortunate that many persons, not engaged in training children, feel indifferent to the great subject. All are interested in the prevalence of the best system of education. Our country cannot long be safe without it. And, of all branches of education, that in the family is the most important, because the most influential on individuals and society. A distinguished Mexican, Mr. Pedraza, late President of the United Mexican States, once remarked with great truth, that if our families were such as they should be, we should need no schools. So indispensable to the happiness and security of our country is family education, that he who may devise the best system for conducting it, will be more worthy of a splendid reward from the nation, than the inventor of any process for separating gold from ore, or, if it were possible, for converting stones into precious gems. Any country is poor and miserable, which calls not its children its jewels.

And if every person in the country has a real interest in the state of family education, how deeply ought a good *father* to feel himself concerned for his own children ! He will not consider any labor too

great that may enable him to understand the task he has to perform. He will consider such reflection, reading and perseverance, as may be needed, but light, when compared with the mortification, the disgrace, and the self-reproach, which result from a vicious or neglected education. He will be attentive in time to such suggestions as are calculated to save him from any fatal error, in laying his plans or prosecuting them. Let him then exercise his reason in determining on the true principles, and fairly weigh such opinions, and reflect on such examples, as are presented to him. Let him neither reject the results of other men's experience, nor adopt their views without understanding what they are founded upon.

In choosing a system of education, we ought to resolve,

1. That its principles shall be the highest.
2. That they shall be conveyed in the best, that is, in the true manner, by example more than by precept, and by the influence of every circumstance which we can properly call to our aid.
3. That the standard shall be the word of God, reason and conscience.

And, on the other hand, we must, from the commencement, reject those great errors under which so many children are educated.

1. That children are incapable of learning any thing useful at five, three, two years, or even twelve or eight months.
2. That great and solemn subjects necessarily lose their importance or seriousness in the view of children by frequent or familiar contemplation.

3. That children are blameworthy whenever they do not act, speak or feel, as would be becoming in their elders. Their nature renders them restless and changeable; and their ignorance of language and the rules of society, often lead them to say and do, innocently, what would be improper or even wrong in their parents.

4. That there is but one particular way in which knowledge, morals or religion, can be taught them; and that useful instruction and good deeds may not be mingled with their childish employments.

5. That their minds never spontaneously seek for improvement.

But there are other subjects to which the father should pay serious attention, and on which it is of vast practical importance that he should early adopt not merely sound opinions, but sound habits.

The various external circumstances of our situation exert an important influence in aiding or counteracting, our plans for the domestic education of our children. Now it often happens, that a great many of these circumstances are not under our control. So far, however, as we can control them, it will be the part of wisdom for us to consider, how will the happiness of my family be affected? and what influence will this or that have upon the formation of the characters of my children?—rather than to inquire, whether we shall be able to make a greater or less show in the eyes of our neighbors.

In choosing a residence, and particularly in building a house for our own use, we should have the comfort and education of our children prominently before us. It

may be too large, for our income, our convenience, or our character. Improvidence and ambition have built many a palace for disappointment and misery to pine in. Many a father may date the decline of his prosperity from the period of his occupying a large house, where additional furniture, a higher style of living, and of course increased expenses, have turned the current against him. And when fatal or prolonged pecuniary difficulties assail a father who bows not in humility to avoid them, what a flood-gate of adversity is opened upon his family ! The aspiring head of ambition is often the first mark for the bolt of ruin. Some families nobly arise from an overthrow, and dignify mediocrity, and even poverty, by cheerfully submitting to them. But how much safer to the character, as well as to the property, it is, never to incur the hazard of such misfortunes as moderation may avoid !

Gay visitors may admire spacious rooms and lofty staircases ; but those who have to traverse them find both care and labor unnecessarily increased. An intelligent, virtuous and harmonious family, desire not to be separated by very wide space ; and it is insulting to the heart as well as the understanding, of a friend, to usher him into a house where intellect and feeling are shrivelled in proportion to the unusual extension of the halls and apartments. And thus it is that the ambitious, on entering magnificent habitations, often expose themselves to ridicule, by rendering their personal defects more conspicuous. A gentleman, after listening impatiently to a description of a splendid mansion erected by a man of no

taste or refinement, very naturally inquired—"Well, does he know how to live in it?"

To be guided by right motives and sound judgment in building a house, often requires independence of mind. A man may be tempted to outstrip a neighbor in building one larger than he needs. But if there be any danger of thus commencing a course of vain rivalry with him or his family, he had better restrain himself at the outset, even if his fortune should not require it. Let him build a smaller or a less splendid habitation. Scarcely any thing is more unfortunate in its influence on children, than a course of rivalry between families; yet how often is life in a great measure occupied with it!

Convenience and good taste should be consulted in planning a house. A surplus of ornaments is displeasing to good taste, and those who display them or value them, show their ignorance and want of it. Simplicity is necessary to real beauty in architecture and furniture, as well as in other things. The rules of taste are to a great extent founded on common sense; and when any doubt is raised, that must decide. It would be ridiculous to make a door like a window, three feet from the floor, or to place a hearth stone up on end, even if travellers should assure us that such fashions prevailed in this or that foreign country. Yet things not less preposterous we often see around us, supported on one pretext and another, which common sense, if allowed to speak freely in any man's mind, would equally condemn. Whoever lays an axe at the root of a venerable tree, to prevent it from hiding his house from expected admirers;

whoever makes a habitation vastly too large for his wants or too high for his convenience, or shows more desire to have it splendid than useful, violates some of the principles of taste. Observing people will see something of the character of persons displayed in the house they have planned or chosen. Though such persons do not always speak their thoughts, they frequently see something in the arrangements, the comparative importance given to ornament and convenience, from which to judge whether the minds and feelings of the inhabitants be well or ill balanced, and what prospects the children have of being well educated. A frivolous mind is displayed in over estimating trifles ; and a parent who can prefer the entertainment of gay visitors to the comfort of his family, or the display of finery to the possession of what is useful, will hardly fail to overlook and neglect those fundamental rules in the management of his house on which depend the improvement and the real happiness of rational beings.

In the selection of furniture, let the same principles of good sense and taste be regarded. A good and well-planned house may be half spoiled by ill chosen furniture. The eyes of children may be dazzled with superficial splendors wherever they turn ; they may imbibe false estimates of things from familiarity with objects made for show which should have been made for use ; and will be prepared to go into the world, in their turn, with the same perverted views which their parents have displayed to them. One great evil connected with the cultivation of a false taste in furniture and architecture, as in every thing else, is that the

principle, when extended to other things, is not only unreasonable or ridiculous, but often dangerous, and even ruinous to important interests. But the greatest evil, and that which the parent should most carefully guard against, is, that wrong and extravagant views cannot be indulged without turning us away from some great duty, and at the same time that it depreciates its importance in our eyes.

If the father would have his daily duties clear to his mind, and easy of performance, let the whole plan and arrangement of his house be such as to present none of those impediments above alluded to. Let there be nothing incompatible with good sense, and let every thing tend to foster just ideas and feelings in his family.

And here I would say a word on dress, as it is another subject of great consequence in the same point of view, and because similar principles must be applied to it. It is a thing, of necessity constantly before our eyes, and the frequent subject of attention; and, unless we are on our guard in establishing habits, and are careful not to conform to the frivolous taste too generally prevailing, it will probably usurp a large share of the thoughts and conversation of our family. False taste in dress has this disadvantage over that displayed in our dwellings, that it accompanies the person wherever he goes, and proclaims in the streets and to strangers, not the views or character of some other person, or our own some years ago, but what they were this morning; and a glance of an eye, (generally a first one,) will convey the idea, either that he is infected with vanity, pride, indolence, slovenliness, &c.

or that, having devoted just sufficient attention to his exterior to appear neat, and agreeable, and to avoid every thing that may seem inconsistent with himself, his mind has since been occupied with things of greater importance.

And after a good father has looked about upon his whole domestic empire, and seen things placed on such a footing as he should desire, some very interesting thoughts may occur to his mind.—“ Here is the place where I am to train my children to wisdom and goodness. Here, if life be spared, under my hands and under my direction and example, they will receive characters which will, in a great degree, ever abide with them. If I would have them regard with philanthropy the whole human race, and be through life the servants of God, I must teach them here to know and love their Maker ; they must be trained with affection for each other, and taught to look on the world with friendly feelings and kind intentions. If I would have them prepared to submit to the discipline of Providence, or to be obedient to the laws of the land, they must be ruled with firmness and love by me. If I would have them love virtue and knowledge, I must show them that I know and value the enjoyments they bestow, and am daily and ardently progressing in both. I must hold out the benefits they confer, as the abundant reward of the exertions necessary to obtain them, and lead on in both by such steps, and by such means, as are adapted to their nature. Here is an arduous task before me : but what task is better calculated to improve while it gratifies ? What virtue, what science, may

I not include within such a range? What useful power of my mind, what pure feeling of my heart, may not thus be brought into action? What pleasure and benefit may I not derive from such a study of the mind, of the various objects on which it may be occupied, and that infinite Being who has created them all?

Am I qualified for such a task? Am I duly sensible of the importance of having my external arrangements properly made? Am I ready, with all the necessary preparation of mind and affections, to enter upon such duties?"

There is always a consolation to such as most sensibly feel their incompetency to perform well the duties of education:—the devoted teacher ever makes rapid proficiency in the science of instruction; and those who begin with the greatest reliance on their own powers, often find themselves among the most unsuccessful in the end.

Those fathers, also, who have few external advantages for training their children, have often been observed to have virtuous, sensible, and useful families. Indeed, a pious, devoted, sensible, intelligent father, whatever be his poverty or difficulties in life, has every reason to persevere, for the success of such means as they use has been proved by thousands of cases. While the wealth and splendor of the richest inhabitants of our cities are frequently dissipated in a single generation; virtue often entails comfort, health, respectability and happiness, on the descendants of the good, whether in the town, the village, or the hamlet.

## CHAPTER III.

### YOUNG CHILDREN.

Treatment of young infants—Reflections and studies appropriate to the father during the early infancy of his child—Crying—Improper excitement—How to counteract fretfulness and passion in young infants—First step in discipline—Signifying desires by kisses—Anecdote—Early language—Importance of the means of expression to the mind—Signs—Anecdote.

ALL that a parent can do for his child during the first few months of its life, is, to promote its health and consult its enjoyments within the limited circle to which its faculties are confined. With the immediate care of it, of course the father will have little to do; but it will be both proper and interesting for him to know the general rules for the treatment of an infant. Warm clothing should envelope it, from the soles of the feet to the neck, by night and day, graduated according to the surrounding atmosphere, but no bandage should strongly compress its tender form. Daily washing is necessary to keep the skin in a healthy state; its delicate organs should not be pained by strong light, loud or jarring sounds.

It should be fed and put to sleep when nature requires it, but as early as possible should be habituated to regular periods for both. It will be for the comfort both of parents and child if it be put to sleep from the

first without rocking or carrying. Habit will reconcile children to many things of this kind. Some judicious persons believe that the use of a cradle is dangerous to the brain; and this may be easily believed, while we see how violently some nurses rock their children when they wish to force them into a slumber. It is certainly better to dispense with it where it can be done with ease. Violent jumping and throwing up of children is to be avoided.

As soon as the infant notices things about it, it should be often gratified with opportunities to look at objects of different sizes, forms and colors, particularly in gentle motion. The sweet tones of the voices of parents, particularly the mother, are a never varying source of pleasure, and should be afforded to the child every hour of the day. But on such subjects nature teaches so well, as to leave little to be said in a book.

Providence, who has made so many admirable arrangements in the establishment of families, seems to have allowed the young parent time for reflection and preparation between the birth of the child and the period when its religious, moral, and intellectual education may begin. Its physical education, it is to be remembered, begins with its life; and in the days of early infancy the foundation is often laid for a miserable life or a premature death, by mismanagement. Although the father is not the principal manager of his babes, yet his forethought and exertions are necessary, to secure the accommodations and the means for their care and nurture.

It would be well if every father would allow him-

self, at least once in his life, while he has his little child upon his knee, and feels his heart opened by the warm and tender paternal affections which family scenes inspire, to reflect, that this little helpless being will probably be such an one as himself in some important traits of character. His interest in the babe certainly might then often remind him of his strong inducements to become both wise and good. And let this conviction be but firmly fixed in the mind, and frequently brought to recollection, until to remember it shall be a habit, and it will act as a most powerful aid in directing him to the proper course to pursue in many difficult cases. It may indeed without hesitation be presumed, that such a habit, once formed, will often prove a more ready and faithful guide to the parent than any earthly teacher could become : for who can, in ordinary circumstances, be so well acquainted with a case in which his child is interested, or have the powers of his mind so actively directed to it, as the parent ?

It has passed into common belief, as an indisputable truth, that crying is the language of infancy, dictated by nature as a signal of pain and desires. This however is not the fact in the sense in which it is received, and, unfortunately, frequently acted on. Cries of distress are often the first language which the nurse or the parent regards, but uneasiness is usually first betrayed to an observant eye by some symptom of restlessness. Yet we must not always wait for even the latter. The parent, certainly the mother, should know by observation how often an infant needs a change of position, and, as he grows older, a change

of place, sights, sounds, playthings, &c. To let a young child always remain in one position until it cries, especially if rattles and other means are resorted to, to prevent it from crying as long as possible, is very improper, and to children of certain dispositions may be very injurious.

It is important to the comfort and the character of the child, that it be prevented from frequent and unnecessary crying. Every observer of children must have remarked the striking difference there is between those of different families in the frequency and the occasions of their crying and screaming, and how useless as well as intolerable is a bad habit of this nature. It requires but little reflection, certainly but little observation, to convince one, that a habit may be formed on either side, and that a child who cries but once, five, or ten times a day, has a great advantage in various respects over one which cries fifty. For sounds of fretfulness or anger are not less irritating to the subject than to the bystander; and the excitement produced by sobbing, attempting to speak, and a consciousness of doing wrong, is superadded, so that the nerves are agitated in a manner at once very painful and difficult to be subdued. Frequent repetitions produce lasting effects; and we often find men and women carrying with them through life an irritability that may be rationally attributed to early mismanagement.

After these remarks, it can hardly be necessary to caution a parent against permitting his child to be excited by teasing, or being frightened; and yet many well meaning persons seem to think that any

excitement of strong feelings is as agreeable to the children who experience them, as to themselves who witness them. I would be peremptory with such friends, if expostulation would not avail: for I remember sufferings I have gone through for their gratification. I believe that the physical effects of such excitement are sometimes felt by a child for hours.

It should be the hourly care of the good mother or nurse, to prevent or allay every tendency to unnecessary violent excitement, and to preserve the feelings in an uniform and tranquil tone, necessary throughout life, to enjoyment, as well as to improvement, physical, moral, intellectual and religious. Fretfulness will be sometimes found to seize a child without any apparent cause; and then it may generally be attributed to some derangement of the health. From the age of five or six months, for two years or more, infants are usually peculiarly exposed to it while teething; and their sudden starts, screams, and fickleness with their toys, must not be of course presumed to arise from bad temper. Kind words and diversion must then be resorted to. Bathing in warm or cold water, is one of the best expedients to soothe the feelings, however irritated. Moderate excitement may often be allayed by merely washing the face and hands with a wet sponge.

I must however caution the parent against attributing too much to ill health or other accidental causes of excitement. He must remember that no child has ever been known since the earliest period of the world, destitute of an evil disposition; and that his

infant, however sweet it may appear, has the same propensities within him, and will inevitably betray them. Whatever may be the prejudices, or the theories, of the father on the subject, if he lays out a plan of education on any principles which are not founded on this presumption, he will find that it will not suit the case. If he calculates on leading his child to choose the good by only presenting duty to his view, he will be most grievously disappointed. If he supposes that he has to deal with a being as much inclined to right as to wrong, his whole practice in educating it will be full of painful facts to convince him of the contrary. History and our personal experience show the nature of man ever running one way, and our opposite theories will only take ourselves and our children more rapidly along with the mighty current.

One simple measure for discipline or government may be early taken, and I have seen it effectually and beautifully practised. Train the infant to signify its wants by kissing instead of crying. I have known a family in which three children have been trained to it from about the age of eight months, although one of them was peculiarly unwilling to be kissed, and long resisted teaching ; it became habituated to it by mild and persevering management, and practised it with pleasure as long as it remained unable to express itself otherwise. This plan may be objected to by some, on account of a common doctrine above alluded to, viz. that crying is the natural language of pain, and the natural means of expressing wants. But I trust that the objection has been already sufficiently answered.

Simple as is the plan to substitute kissing for crying, interesting as it is, and useful in practically training the child so early to subdue its feelings, it seems strange that it should not have been more generally practised. But few have ever thought of such a thing, and some of those to whom it has been proposed, have pronounced it impracticable, and thus saved themselves the present task of trying it. Experience however has shown that it is practicable, and reflection will prove that the principle is an excellent one. The labor of forming this habit is also well paid for, by the clear insight it gives the parent into some of the capacities of an infant. It has probably been allowed to cry for what it wants ; and of course a habit is already formed, which is strong in proportion to the extent of its indulgence. If you pay no heed to its cries, but after bringing its lips to your own, yield to its desires, and persevere in this treatment, you will perceive that he begins to be affected by the experience he thus receives. Like a traveller entering a foreign country, he uses the tongue and the coin which will procure what he desires. He deals no longer, or far less, in screams and cries, and calls his kisses into requisition.

The same practice should be extended. If a young child wants what another has, or to play with its brother, make him present his request in the form of a kiss. I have known an infant of ten months, which, having been taught those lessons, kissed for every thing it desired. Even in a dark night, when it wished its parents to repeat a story or a song, or to accept a proposition to be fed, to change its position,

&c. a kiss was the sign. In the day-time also, it was the sweet expression of petition ; and being sometimes accompanied by a motion of the hand or a turn of the eye, rarely left any doubt of its object. I once witnessed the affecting sight of a little girl of eight months, who was constantly desirous of changing hands on account of the restlessness attendant on recovery from sickness, silently expressing that wish in the same manner.

The language of childhood is proverbially interesting ; and the more deeply we study it, the more substantial ground do we find to be pleased with it, on philosophical principles. The sweet tones, and pretty imperfections of utterance, are not the chief attractions to a reflecting observer : they betray the state and faculties of the mind, and the nature of the affections, in active operation, and without disguise ; and by the proper study of these we may learn much of the character and capacities of man, and the modes and means of improving them. Studying the minds of children, is like watching the operations of bees in a glass hive ; and should be pursued without delay, for like those busy insects they soon begin to avoid observation, and draw a veil over their operations.

I would wish parents and teachers to realize one important truth in respect to this subject : viz. that the mind of a child is greatly in advance of its tongue. This is shown to some extent by its learning the meaning of many words long before it can speak them. It is further proved by its capacity for using the language of signs at a still earlier age. The infant has power over its hands and fingers long before

it can perform the delicate movements of the organs of speech, necessary to form simple words. This is perfectly natural : for the use of the hands is a matter of prime necessity, and they, as well as their objects, are seen by the eye : but the organs of speech are out of sight, and are not brought into requisition until the owner finds he cannot do longer without words. The application of words too, it is to be remembered, is arbitrary ; and of course the labor of every step in spoken language is very great—particularly the earliest steps.

Without entering further into this curious subject, I will merely remark, that children cannot be reasonably expected to speak at a much earlier age than they commonly do. The task is so great that nothing but necessity driving them every step, and much time being allowed for their slow progress, could enable them to acquire their mother tongue. Yet without language the human mind can make but little advancement in knowledge, the heart can enjoy but little pleasure, and cannot be much improved. An uneducated deaf and dumb person, affords too strong corroboration of this truth. It is therefore very desirable that a child should be furnished with the means of expressing thought and feeling as soon as possible, both for its enjoyment, and its moral and intellectual benefit. It is desirable, also, to form habits of mental activity ; for a mind which ceases to progress in knowledge, loses, in a degree, that great distinctive faculty of mind—the desire and the capacity for improvement.

These remarks on language have been made to apply

to children of all ages, as the principle holds good, throughout life ; and are designed to remind the father, that he should ever aim at keeping up an intelligent communication with his child's mind.

I will close with stating a fact, designed to show what may be done, and to encourage the father to do something to aid his infant in obtaining early some means of expression. A child of about eight months old, was once sitting on my knee, and observing the wheels of my watch. I shut and opened it several times, and by taking her little hands, closing them together and opening them, so as to resemble the opening of the watch, taught her to do it, rewarding her by showing her the wheels of the watch whenever she did it. The sign she repeated daily ; and after some time began to apply it in a more extensive sense, first to opening a door. Wishing to see the inside of a drawer one day, she pointed at it, and used the same sign, although the motion of opening a drawer is so different from that of opening a watch. Success in expressing an idea for the first time, by any means which costs exertion, proves a great encouragement to a child to make new attempts ; while repeated failure discourages it into inaction, which may become habitual.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN.

The health of children—Some knowledge of the human system desirable, and a few medicines—A good system of food, exercise, early rising, &c. best—Diet—Various exercises appropriate to the health of body and mind.

IN relation to the health of children, the father cannot expect to have the principal care of it devolving upon himself: yet he ought to obtain some acquaintance with the bones, the muscles, the tendons, the membranes, &c., which compose the frail human frame. He should know something of the nature, symptoms, and treatment of the diseases, to which he and his family are most likely to be exposed, and keep a few of the safe medicines, whose use he may easily learn from a judicious physician. All he can learn and do in this manner, however, will not prove in the long run of as much value as the early adoption and steady observance of a few simple rules of wholesome diet, early rising, active employments or exercises, judicious dress, and cheerful tempers.

Children should be trained to love every species of food which is placed before them; but with respect to this I would recommend that the example be set them of eating of but one dish of meat at a meal, and in moderate quantity, especially when any thing

else is to succeed it ; that spices be discarded ; and that they drink only milk and water. Children have such appetites, when in good health, that they require no rich sauces, no display of accomplished cookery ; and such is the plain truth with respect to adults, though it will be difficult to make some of my readers credit the assertion. When a child is hungry, as in the morning, promise it a piece of " nice bread, made of fine flour, from the wheat (or rye, or corn,) which God makes to grow, on purpose for us, in the fields." Praise its taste, beforehand ; and while the child is eating it, take a bit yourself, and ask if it is not very good. Whoever has a child really fond of bread, may avoid many of the dangers which others fall into from eating improper food. I would, in like manner, praise good, wholesome food of different kinds, and eat it with cheerfulness and gratitude, conversing, however, on subjects of greater importance, while at meals. A child should be habituated to seeing food regarded according to its real value, and used for its appropriate end ; and, that he may enjoy this " advantage in education," the father should ever bear in mind, that,

1. Food must be wholesome, or it loses its nature, and ought to lose its name : so that a parent who feeds his child with any thing likely to injure it, must be said in some sense to give it poison.

2. Food derives its value from its power of supporting the body ; and the body is valuable only when subservient to the mind. Of course, that aliment is the best, indeed the only proper food, which will most promote the health, sustain the powers in

their natural harmony, and keep them in the best condition to be submissive and useful to the mind.

3. The taste, when properly trained, and employed on wholesome food, is the source of sufficient gratification to induce us to eat at proper intervals and in proper quantities. Providence has given simple food a relish to a hungry man, superior to any which cookery can impart to those miscalled dainties which it sets before the glutton or the valetudinarian. If we would consult even the temporary gratification of our children therefore at meals, we should do nothing to weaken that taste, or to underrate the taste of bread, water, and the plainest food best suited to their stomachs.

Rising early, is a habit which it is of high importance to fix in children; and in forming it, there is far greater facility than in most other cases. There is a natural propensity in children generally to early rising, which needs only to be gratified and encouraged. They usually retire to bed some hours before their parents; and at daylight, or at least at sunrise, are generally awake, and anxious to rise. Many of them are actually bred up with difficulty to the habit of taking morning naps: which, when once formed, generally prevails through life. Let the father deny himself so far as to retire early, and become an early riser also. His health, enjoyments and usefulness, he may depend upon it, will be perceptibly benefited. Long-lived persons have been found, after extensive inquiry, to resemble each other only in this important practice. And this may be connected with another preventive of disease, active employment.

The morning is the season for activity : the frame, invigorated by repose, is prepared for exertion, and motion gives pleasure. The pure atmosphere, so much more bracing than at other hours, so much sweeter and more exhilarating than the air of a confined chamber, has been prepared to be breathed ; and like all nature's medicines, it is superior to any which science can produce. Early rising and early exercise might more properly be called food than medicine, as they are designed for daily use, and to protect us from disease rather than to remove it. Every thing, except mere sloth, invites us, nay, requires of us, to train up our children to use them. The morning is the most favorable season for exercising the frame, as well as for making useful impressions on the mind and heart, of important facts, moral principles or religious feelings ; and whoever tries to conduct the education of his child independently of this practice, will lose some of the most favorable opportunities. Exercises may be much varied, but should be as far as possible connected with something gently exciting to the spirits, instructive to the mind, or useful in their results. Children of three years old will often become tired of mere sport, and wish for some useful or instructive employment. It does not generally arise from a foolish desire to be thought to resemble men and women, that they ask to be allowed to imitate them in their employments. Who has not felt the unsatisfactory nature of games, and longed and sought for occupations which should leave some useful or gratifying results behind them. " I well remember," once said a man, " many an hour, perhaps

I may say day or week, spent in attempts to invent, or experiments to test, plans to accomplish such objects. In multitudes I failed—not, as I could now show, for lack of exertion, patience or ingenuity: but for the want of materials, encouragement or information, on arriving at some obstacle insurmountable without it.”

I would have a child of two and a half years old supplied with smooth bits of wood, stones, shells, &c. of different colors. Blocks of wood, to pile upon the floor or the ground, may offer one simple branch of amusement for older ones. At a very early period of life, they will not exert ingenuity in placing them, but may take more interest than they express in learning their external qualities, color, hardness, smoothness, shapes, &c. At three, give them about twenty blocks in the shape of bricks, that is, one inch thick, two broad and four long, or in that proportion; and give them half a dozen or more sticks shaped like timbers, and as many more like plank, that they may build houses. Or you may give them twenty or more sticks like logs, with the ends notched so as to fit together, and teach them to construct a log house or barn. The inhabitants or cattle may be represented with things not very like, unless they have toys of the kind; and they may be taught to go daily through the form of taking them to drink, giving them feed, &c. &c.

It is always desirable to connect agreeable occupation of the mind and feelings with exercise of the body; and what opportunity can be more fit, than a morning walk, or an hour in the garden or at other work, often presents to the father, to inculcate some

knowledge or duty in an appropriate manner upon his child? What can be more painful, than to see a parent silent, and absent in mind, in the company of his children, especially during a walk or a ride? Yet there are those who seem to think they can add nothing to their enjoyment or improvement by assisting younger minds to the acquisition of instruction or pleasure. A father should cultivate in himself a taste for the beauties of the natural world. What multiplied opportunities he may find, in morning and afternoon excursions, to direct the attention of his children to them, and thus to lead them into a habit which greatly tends to refine and purify, while it opens a way to much enjoyment. In such employment, the pious father should feel that he treads the path sanctified by his Saviour, who honored so many a natural object, with his notice, while with some of the most humble of them he deigned to be compared. How delightful it is, while the father bids his little one to look the lamb or the dove in the face, and say whether it looks kind or cross; to observe its motions, and say of whom it is an emblem; to reflect how sweetly and permanently the object may be thus associated for life with some passage in the Scriptures, or some attribute of Him of whom Moses did write.

While writing on the means of promoting the health of children, I thus unconsciously stray to such subjects of thought, and such means of cherishing the affections, as they naturally lead to; and who can avoid admiring again the harmony which pre-

vails among the enjoyments of a sound mind united with a sound body ?

The manner in which a child may be initiated into a knowledge of geography is mentioned in another part of this volume ; and it may be made a very pleasant object for a walk or ride, to visit a pond, a brook, a commanding hill ; or, as the plan embraces various branches of natural and civil history, &c. &c. plants, animals, roads, bridges, fisheries, mills, boats, the tools and processes of the arts, the implements and systems of agriculture, the forms observed at courts, and public meetings, and in short almost every thing which can be usefully learned or taught, may be embraced in this plan.

Against fishing, shooting, and every thing connected with the destruction of life, I would caution the parent. Children naturally, I believe, shrink from inflicting pain upon animals when they realize that they suffer. The example of another, particularly of a parent, will however soon suppress and obliterate such emotions ; and nothing can be more cruel, than the acts which children sometimes commit on harmless brutes, when misled by example.

## CHAPTER V.

### RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

At what age is it to be commenced?—How is it to be conveyed?—

Force of example—Anecdotes to prove early religious instruction possible—Reasons for undertaking it.

To many a parent has it been a subject of most interesting inquiry, “What is my duty in relation to the religious education of my children?” In reply to this question, answers have been returned by different persons, skilled in other branches of education, opposed to the views of many judicious and practical parents. On a subject which is so differently regarded as religion, this diversity of views is not to be wondered at, so much as that parents and teachers should ever receive an opinion as decisive, without inquiring into the principles on which it is founded. If there be any point in education to which we may claim the attention of the good father, it is this most important point of all.

That distinguished friend of instruction, Fellenberg, has expressed the opinion, that the mysteries of religion should not be taught to a young child, because it is unable to understand them. It has also been asserted in this country, that a child is in danger of forming erroneous views of Christianity, unless its

mind be first brought to it, by a particular course of training, in an acquaintance with its obligations to parents, &c. Fellenberg has not informed us what they are which he calls mysteries; nor has it yet been shown, so far as I know, why it is necessarily easier for a child to comprehend or to perform its duties to its parent than to its Maker. As the principles which we lay down on this subject are to be fundamental, let us use particular care that they be sound, or they may mar our whole fabric.

On account of the supreme importance of religion, and the remarkable adaptation of all the faculties of man to his being a religious creature, we should naturally presume that he would be fitted to receive religious knowledge in very early life. The Christian religion præeminently requires us to form this conclusion, as it proclaims obedience to its precepts to be necessary to salvation at that early age—whenever it be—when the child begins to be capable of transgression. Religious instruction, then, in a Christian country, is pressed upon the parent as a thing of prime necessity; and the neglect or delay of it may be justly compared with his failure to procure necessary nourishment to support the life of the child. Nay, we must go farther: for, as negligence in teaching the truth, in many cases, amounts to an actual though an indirect inculcation of error, the omission of religious instruction resembles withholding bread, and placing poison within reach.

Before anything is said about the direct means by which children may be early instructed in religious truths, and trained to religious feelings, the mind of

the parent may be turned to consider the force of example. There is a period in the life of every person, when he begins to attach motives to conduct : to judge of character by actions. Influenced probably by what it feels within, a child early and spontaneously looks upon those around it as influenced by feelings and intentions in what they do. And by the way, it needs no argument, no particular course of training, to lead it to this belief. Whenever this period arrives, then commences a most important branch of instruction : viz. instruction by example, to which the person will ever be more or less subject.

This subject is eminently a practical one, and I will therefore endeavor to interest my readers at the outset, by stating some of the facts on which I place much reliance. With a child of a very mild and gentle disposition, a father whom I well knew, began, at the age of two years, to pray every morning. Before breakfast they had generally half an hour to spend together in games and prattle. On meeting, he received her with smiles, kisses, and kind expressions. "Who took care of you last night, and waked you so well and happy this morning?" "God." "Where is he? Can you see him? Can he see us? Is he always good? Ought we to be so? Can he help us to be so?" and other such questions, he asked, one, two or more, every day, having before taken favorable opportunities, generally about the calm hour of sunset, to inform her on such points. He then said, "Father is going to thank our good God for taking care of us, and to ask him to make us good to-day. Will you thank him too?" The child usually complied, and

reverently repeated after him a short and simple prayer, which was varied in words and subjects every day. If she turned away and appeared disinclined to the service, he generally urged her to return, but did not insist ; then kneeled himself and repeated a prayer aloud, rose, kissed her, and after a short pause, or a few words, proceeded to play with her or to teach her. In some cases she would ask him to pray with her afterwards ; and the example he set her was found to have a profitable effect on her mind. On going to bed he practised saying an appropriate prayer ; and afterwards whenever he found her awake in the night, used to ask her if she would pray, and lead her in an ejaculatory exercise. At length these practices became habitual with both ; and one of the most delightful recollections he retains of a dear child, now gone from this world, is of her voice repeating a little prayer after him in the dead of night, as was frequently the case when not another word was spoken by each of them before or after it.

He has since pursued a similar course with another child also, of a more lively and irritable disposition, yet with results very similar. With the former, as the difference of character would have led one acquainted with them to expect, the effects were more perceptible ; and she was sometimes known to retire spontaneously, and pray for the recovery of friends from sickness ; and sometimes, when told to do so, she would go and pray alone for her own improvement and forgiveness, after committing a fault, and before the feeling of repentance seemed to have taken entire possession of her.

Now, to give briefly the arguments in favor of early instructing children in religion, and training them to the performance of religious duties, I would remark—

1. We cannot ascertain, from observation, reasoning or revelation, any particular period before which a child cannot learn, and after which it can learn, such important lessons.

2. The neglect of teaching religious truths and duties may amount to the practical inculcation of the great falsehood, that there are no such truths and no such duties. If the parent above alluded to had neglected to speak to his children of God, duty, sin and a Saviour, and had never prayed in their presence ; and if every one else around them had pursued that course, would they not have been inclined to doubt or disbelieve, if after some months or years they had heard of such things ? Would they not at least have questioned the sincerity of their father, who had known such great truths without communicating them or acting under their influence ?

We should not lose sight of what may be called negative instruction, or the impressions conveyed to our children by our omissions and neglect. It is highly important for us to ascertain not only what example is set, by a wise and good man, in what he does, but also in what he does not. How can we teach our children so effectually and naturally our total rejection of heathenism, mohamedanism or any other false doctrine, as by excluding them from our conversation ? Will not our children as they grow up hence presume that we entirely rejected them, even if they never hear us discourse concerning them ?

The Scriptures inculcate the duty of giving early religious instruction in various forms, calculated for children of tender years. The twelve stones which were set up on the bank of Jordan by Divine command, were placed there for the express purpose of exciting children to ask one of those natural questions, which parents of the present day too often discourage and blame as impertinent:—"What mean ye by these stones?" In every arrangement we make for our children, we should have it in recollection, that it must have a meaning. They will ask questions in relation to almost every thing, though it often be but to their own minds, and they will obtain such answers as they can, to illustrate our motives in making them. In relation to that most important subject, religion, we should be particularly careful to offer occasions to excite our children to make inquiries. And this can be done as effectually by pursuing certain practices, as by erecting visible monuments.

Suppose a child, who sees its mother retire at a particular hour in the morning to her closet—the most secluded spot in the house—and regularly returning with a calmer and sweeter expression, softer words, and more dignified demeanor. How natural it would be for it to feel a desire to know the cause of her absence, and of effects so agreeable to itself? I have known a case in which a child of about two years and a half, and of a volatile disposition, began to ask its mother why she thus retired; and as she had been carefully taught as much as possible on this subject, on requesting permission was sometimes al-

lowed to accompany her to her place of secret devotion, where she observed a respectful silence, and often kneeled the whole time. Now let the reader pause for a few moments, and recall some of the recollections of his feelings and thoughts in early childhood. How does every child feel towards his mother; how will every thing which appeared to affect her feelings, touch his heart; how intense and how tender may have been the exercises of this little girl's breast, when she realized for the first time that her mother not only spoke of God's goodness, but daily meditated on him, loved him, held him in awe and reverence, conversed with him, and was becoming more loving and lovely by the exercise! Can any one suppose, that one of those little beings, who in a mere fit of frolic will often imitate words and actions with accuracy which it has witnessed, even after a long interval, and whose memory receives lasting impressions even from trifling circumstances, should get no wise instruction, and no important benefit from such a scene as this? The vicious and the heathen have never found a time so early in the life of their offspring, that they withheld their example and instruction for fear they might be misunderstood; and it behoves Christian fathers and mothers, not to postpone their work until the enemy of all good, by using superior sagacity and diligence, shall have pre-occupied their hearts.

If we are to wait until a child can form an adequate idea of duty to parents, the nature of God, &c. and define his ideas to us correctly, before we begin its religious instruction, will the time ever come? Who has such ideas in perfec-

tion, or how many persons can define such as they have? Is it necessary for us to do this, before we can learn any thing useful of our Maker or ourselves? Alas, we find that our children can break laws before they can define them, or even pronounce the name of the Lawgiver. Let us see then that they have an opportunity also to learn how to obey.

Now the very uncertainty of the time when the child will begin to read motives in actions, affords a most powerful reason why the parent should at all times make his own daily conduct an useful book. We cannot determine too early, that our actions shall teach goodness, as far as they are understood; and this for our own advantage as well as for theirs.

Religious education, lying at the foundation of all other education, should claim most serious attention; and here we may embrace under two heads the principal points on which, as it appears to me, grand errors are most likely to be committed: First, the time for commencing religious instruction; and secondly, the manner of communicating it.

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.” What Christian parent could desire more encouragement from the Scriptures than this text contains, for the earliest possible endeavors to teach religion to his children? But, it is objected,—even by some very excellent and sagacious men,—the child cannot understand invisible things; it can form only erroneous ideas of the Creator, laws, duty, the way of salvation, and other points. To this it may be answered, that it is impossible to ascertain exactly what a child does or does not understand in relation

to a subject on which it has some means of knowledge, and that very weak and simple minds do sometimes learn the way to repentance, faith and heaven. Besides, where does the Bible give us any such warning against the "too early" instruction of any person in the most important wisdom? Its cautions and threats are aimed against teaching falsely, carelessly, and not at all: but no where against the early and faithful endeavor to teach the truth.

Let no Christian parent give ear to such objections: otherwise he will have reason to fear that his child will not be like those who, on meeting the Son of God, could break out with "Hosanna in the highest." Those children must have had instruction, or they would not have known enough of the Saviour to exclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

I was once travelling in company with a little child of three and a half, who had been taught from her earliest days of intelligence, to look upon every thing with a religious eye. Her mother said to her, in a very fine, scene, "see my dear, how green the grass is, how pretty are the flowers!" "Yes," she replied in a whisper, "and God made them all." Thus children may often be thinking of subjects above those which engage the thoughts of others around them. In this case these few words conveyed a gentle reproof to the child's elder companions, who were thinking of less exalted subjects. I have in my possession many facts which show that a little religious truth has sometimes produced excellent effects on children, of the poor as well as of others, even when they have

had little previous instruction. I speak from careful observation and many experiments, when I strongly recommend early and systematic religious training, on a method adapted to the infantile mind and character.

I would answer again to an objector, that children can scarcely have more imperfect or erroneous ideas of God or themselves, than those which are entertained by a large part of men and women, either through indifference or dislike for serious reflection ; and yet no objection is made against teaching them.

3. Many of the objections raised against religious truth by men, are not regarded as such by children. When a parent or teacher, who has the confidence and affection of a little child, undertakes to lead him to a contemplation of such vast and interesting subjects, he meets no obstacles like those which hedge up so many of the minds of adults from its influence. Here is no favorite theory to be surrendered, no supposed logical acumen to be displayed, no long cherished, besetting sin to be exposed, no avowed opinion to be retracted, no party or person to charge with want of consistency, no habit of thrusting by the point of truth with ridicule, or sophistry, or voluntary forgetfulness. The heart which is to be touched is not hardened by the frequent rejection of the arguments you urge. There is seldom any forethought used by a child, before admitting truth, to discover whether it will compel him to admit the obligation of some unpleasant duty. Men often think it necessary for a person to proceed by a certain course of reasoning, like that which is usually pursued in studying

a science, before any real progress can be made. A child will not be able to tell you in logical terms what a law is, or a duty, or a sin, or atonement, and yet will easily admit that he has done wrong in doing what God forbids, and pray for forgiveness, and seek to reform. His want of words or of metaphysics will not prevent him from feeling his obligation to obey, or the indispensable need of a Saviour, nor will they stand between his heart and the throne of Him who dwells with the humble and the contrite. Those who would postpone religious instruction to a somewhat advanced age, (I call three years an advanced age in this case,) appear to me to forget that there is a conscience which in children generally performs its part with greater power and certainty than in adults.

I would therefore urge the good father to endeavor to teach his child religion as early as there is any possibility of its understanding it; and when we shall have considered the second division of the subject, viz. the manner of instruction, I trust the reasonableness of this course will be farther evident.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION—*continued.*

The importance and interest of human physiology, or the knowledge of our own frames—The science of the soul superior to every branch of natural history, &c.—The dawning of intellect—The first appearance of the affections—The acquisition of ideas—Errors of opinion concerning the time to commence religious instruction—A plan recommended for early teaching the fundamental principles of the Christian religion—Parents responsible for the religious doctrines they inculcate.

THE life of a father may be viewed as one of constant and interesting variety, in the same sense as that of the chemist, who has always abundant subjects for curious attention, investigation and experiments. There is always ample room for inquiry, reading and reflection. The science which he pursues is not only of the highest importance, when viewed as that of simply training the body, mind and heart: but, when regarded in its whole extent, is seen to embrace every other branch of science, and, as has before been represented, includes also self-knowledge, and the knowledge of the Creator. How unimportant, compared with the practical study of the human mind and heart, appear the habits of brutes, the number and nature of fishes and birds! Learned men have thought it worthy of them to devote years

to inquiring into the peculiarities of the most insignificant, and even disgusting, reptiles and insects: but the parent, while he will wish to pay proper attention to these, will not so unreasonably magnify their importance as to forget those of a far loftier nature, more worthy of the mind, and more useful to man.

If there be any thing truly interesting in the study of any branch of the natural kingdom, as we call the works of creation; if there be anything in the nature of minerals, vegetables, or animals, worthy of close attention, the human frame must be allowed to be much more so, because it is the most perfect of all the material objects with which we are acquainted; while at the same time it constitutes the wonderful habitation of the soul. Selfish considerations, as well as a love for other people, should recommend to us a proper regard to this subject. Shall we remain in voluntary ignorance of our own bones and sinews, the causes of disease and the preservatives of health, while we show such solicitude to enlarge and embellish our houses,—the habitations of the habitations of our souls? This branch of study the father has opportunity to pay some attention to, as has before been remarked, during the months of his child's tenderest infancy; and as its frame is daily developing its powers, he will be able to observe the exemplification of some of the principles of which he reads.

But the father's attention will not be long confined to observing the animal nature alone. The first time the little eyes are fixed upon any object in such a manner as to show that it excites attention, the pa-

rent feels what perhaps he cannot express. The first gleam of intelligence which indicates the action of a soul, seems far more sublime than the break of day in the east. The sight of it forces upon the observer ideas of the nature of the mind which probably he never before experienced. He has looked for weeks upon a form, dear and beautiful perhaps to his eyes, but exhibiting only the traits of animal nature: when suddenly a ray from a superior source shoots from the eye—that organ which seems nearest the soul! The limbs and features which have been gazed upon by the parents on account of their symmetry, delicacy, or resemblance to other friends, are viewed with other feelings, when they begin to obey the will of the unseen soul, for whose use they were formed and perfected.

The time will also come, ere long, when the mother will perceive the lip assume a new expression, and she will exclaim with delight—"Oh, he smiles!" How cold does mere intellect appear when we first witness the display of the affections! However happy the parent may have felt, when successively informed that his child was in existence, that he possessed a perfect frame, and was endued with intelligence; there is nothing that goes to the heart like the first return of smile for smile, the first gentle drawing of the little lips, which conveys the reality of that idea we would express by the words—"Oh, he loves me!" Mind itself now loses its supremacy in our view; and if we will duly reflect and balance the intellect and the affections, we shall discover the superior importance of training the latter aright, because the former, like the members of the

bodily frame, are in a great measure destined to be but their servants.

And now the progress made by the soul in its use of the senses will be perceptible ; and an attentive observer will find ample scope for curious remarks, ingenious experiments, and humble admiration of that Almighty Mind which makes wise provision for the developement and improvement of those faculties which he has created, even from their earliest existence. The curious and complicated machinery, corporeal and spiritual, of which the infant consists, might have remained forever in a state of inaction but for the incitement given it to exertion by its wants, and the means of gratifying them. The parent will observe that it requires not only food, and occasional changes of position, but changes of sights, sounds, and objects of touch. The mind, as well as the body, is restless, and claims more and more to nourish and occupy it.

And the infant affords a powerful practical lesson on the manner in which instruction should be communicated. Show a child of three weeks old a lighted lamp, (but do not dazzle its weak sight in the experiment,) and his eyes are fixed upon it long before they will turn to any less striking object. Place one of six or seven months upon a plain floor, or any thing else of an uniform color, and he shows little regard for it. But when placed on a figured carpet, or shown any object of bright colors, children of that age will often express lively pleasure. I have noticed several infants to be early attracted by the motion of the foot while sitting on the parent's knee ;

and after a period of a few weeks, on being laid upon a carpet, or brought near a piece of polished metal, I have seen them even laugh out for joy. Every thing which they take a fancy to and can obtain, they feel over and over, with their hands and lips, for a long time ; for the perception of external qualities of material objects at that age gives them pleasure. In the long process of forming an acquaintance with the world around them in detail, we can give them no assistance, except by supplying them with proper objects for examination. They can derive no benefit from all the knowledge we possess, and they look not to us for any aid, but pursue the very same course which we and our ancestors pursued in turn, with equal independence and equal success. By ten thousand repeated touches and looks, the hardness and softness, the roughness and smoothness, the colors, forms and sizes of the objects with which the child is familiar, become impressed upon its mind, and associated together as they really are ; and when a considerable progress has been made in the reception of ideas, language begins to come in with its aid.

When a child first associates objects with sounds, it is impossible to tell ; but it is very certain that it always forms a considerable acquaintance with language before it begins to speak. I have tried several children, who at eight months of age would turn their eyes on several of the most familiar objects and persons around them, as their names were successively mentioned. I noted down on one occasion the result of an experiment of this kind which greatly surprised me. A little girl of eleven months, who had been

taught but few of the words by design, pointed out the eyes, nose, feet, arms, &c. of her doll, and different objects in the room, the names of which she must have learned from the conversation of others. And in learning language, when they begin to use it, children also enjoy much pleasure. Providence has made it highly agreeable to them to attach a name to a thing, and so to indicate it when they can speak. Making a natural sign seems not to give them much pleasure : but the ingenuity of speech delights them. In the early attempts to speak, as in every other exertion to improve, let the parent encourage the child, by an expression of approbation. However imperfect the success, the child has done his best, and this you can safely tell him. How much they need encouragement, how much exertion and courage it requires to make a little one expose its conscious weakness in an attempt it has never made before, none but close observers, or those who have good memories, can form any idea. I have seen a child sit thoughtfully for some time, meditating how some new word should be pronounced, or some idea expressed by a combination of words, and feeling so backward at making an experiment it had decided on, that a word of encouragement, or a smile, was necessary to bring it out. How effectually will indifference, ridicule, and especially harshness, discourage and postpone the exertions of a mind in such a state !

And I have said so much on this point, because the principle is to be extended to every branch of instruction, to every step in the career of knowledge. The man, like the child, if he improves at all, must improve

by his own exertions ; and to the exertion he must be led by motives. The all-wise Creator has made the path of knowledge inviting, and this by the simple display of the attractions with which he has invested it, to perceptions which are so formed as to derive a pleasure from its pursuit. This he does with consummate skill and inimitable success, because he is actuated by boundless benevolence, and perfectly understands both mind, matter and motives. Man, through indolence, remains ignorant of both, and too generally seeks to accomplish the object by means not only inadequate, but injurious. Being unable, through negligence in study, to present knowledge in its attractive aspects, he resorts to emulation in its stead ; and when that fails, he calls in harshness and even violence to his aid. How different is such a course from the plan of that Great Instructor, who attracts our attention to one branch of nature's productions by painting them with colors in which the eye delights, perfuming them to gratify another sense, and enriching them with flavors most agreeable to our palate—who has made “the heavens declare the glory of God” by the exhibition of beauties not merely transcendent, but varied, bright and attractive.

It is a very common error, for persons to suppose that a child must first have a general acquaintance with the history recorded in the Scriptures, and a knowledge of all the leading personages and events in their due order and relations, before it can understand the great doctrines inculcated, or entertain such views of religion as are necessary to enable it to embrace its fundamental principles.

“Into this unfortunate mistake,” remarked a teacher of children, “I once fell, and was not convinced of my error till after long ineffectual labor to teach children on such a plan. I could sometimes get them interested in particular passages of the story of the flood, Joseph, or David, but their memory fixed upon only such facts as were of no use in connecting together the great parts of the history of the Bible. I at length discovered, that if I should persevere in my course, the children might either reach maturity or die before they could arrive at the knowledge of a Saviour; and reflection and experiment convinced me that I had been misusing the Scripture narratives, by directing them only at the head—by endeavoring to make the facts merely understood and remembered, instead of aiming chiefly to produce in the heart the feelings they are designed to inculcate. My plan was soon changed; and my success was more gratifying.” It may be recommended to those who teach religion to the young, (and I might say the old also who need such instruction,) to adopt the following general course, which may be gone through in a few lessons.

1. The being and nature of God—That he is great, good, &c.

2. The creation of the world and man, “all very good.”

3. The condition of Adam and Eve in Eden.

4. The fall; and on this I would show distinctly the sin; by plain arguments merely. The conscience will acknowledge that it was ungrateful, unreasonable, foolish in the extreme, and on all accounts

wrong. The child will never ask who made the man and woman disobey. He will feel that they did it themselves.

5. The consequences of the fall, to Adam and Eve, in the perversion of their affections and minds, which made them totally different from what they had been; and in their situation. Its consequences to their children must then be shown. It will be enough to tell the young that their children were like the parents; and a child's conscience will acknowledge that he is so too, not loving God, and goodness, as he ought.

6. Enlarge upon the inability of mankind to regain happiness and the favor of God. Even if we should do all we ought during the rest of our lives, how could we make up for the evil we have already done?

7. The promise of a Saviour in Genesis iii. 15. and a brief account of some of the good men who believed a Saviour would come, and trusted in him: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, &c. with a few passages from different parts of the Bible in relation to Christ.

8. Open at Luke ii. and give a simple account of the Saviour's birth, without attempting to explain to a young child much about Augustus, or Cyrenius, or taxing, &c. (It was "in a country a great way off," and "many years ago," which they may learn more about when they are older.) Then mention that Simeon (verse 25) and Anna (verse 36) were two of those good people who expected a Saviour, and trusted him, and longed to see him before they died—their supposable feelings and thoughts. On so inte-

resting a subject it will be well to enlarge. Then read their impressions on discovering the Saviour in a little boy brought into the house of God. Make the children partake in those feelings, by showing that you have them while speaking of the passage and reading it, and that Christ is of inestimable, unspeakable value, to your prospects of happiness.

9. Luke ii. 40th verse to the end. By this and a few other passages, show what Christ did and said, whence the children will form an idea of his life and instructions. When they are interested in any passage, mark it to be committed to memory, or to be often repeated.

10. The crucifixion. I would read the account and comment upon it briefly, but would rather not dwell on the painful circumstances to a young child, as its feelings will be sympathetic, and lead it away from the object of his death. I would, like Paul, preach Christ crucified, but chiefly as a sacrifice in our stead. This will be most clearly presented to a child's comprehension, by speaking of him as loving us so much as to come from heaven to save us, taking our sins upon him, living like a poor man, without a home, &c. being ill-treated, and at last put to death.

11. The resurrection. Here is a delightful opportunity to give a child lofty views of heaven, and a just idea of the greatness, goodness, and glory of the Redeemer, and of many other subjects, in which he ought to be instructed. I would remember that if Christ be not risen, then our faith is vain.

The young will find endless interest in hearing

Scripture characters and events described and recounted, if they be presented in a manner and language adapted to their capacities ; though not much if they find their parents or teachers are indifferent to them, or preferring other books. The parent, in his instructions, should read the words of scripture whenever he appears to read them, using his own only when he is professedly explaining them, or commenting upon the subject. A father once substituted a word, in a verse of the New Testament, for a less familiar one, that his little daughter might understand it ; and the next day, while her mother at her request was reading the same, she said, " You do not read it right ;" insisting on retaining the word he had used. This taught him a lesson. He has never since repeated the experiment.

With regard to the doctrines to be taught : that is a point for which the parent is and must be responsible. If we inculcate fundamental error, either through indifference, or prejudice, or dislike of the truth, the fault is ours. No parent can avoid accountability for misleading his child when the path which his Maker has pointed out for both to pursue lay strait before them. As, however, few will expect to induce their children to believe, perform and love what they reject, neglect and disrelish, or perhaps oppose, the parent must feel that he has a double motive to become a sincere and practical Christian. Happy will it be, both for himself and his child, if he commences his task of education with that character ; without it he will have to encounter obstacles at every step. Few, in a land like ours,

will hesitate to wish that their children may live according to the principles of the gospel ; and it is a gratifying reflection, in urging the inculcation of them, that in relation to what is essential, there is so extensive an accordance of opinion among different sects. The education of children with a due regard to these, is extremely well fitted to impress parents still more strongly with their value, and of the secondary importance of every thing else.

The following conversation, which actually occurred as it is here given, between a little girl of about three and a half, and her father, may show the natural influence of the course here recommended. She had been accustomed to it, and the beauty of morning, with the calmness of her heart, often seemed to be thus associated with thoughts of religion.

On the occasion alluded to, she came in with her little tea cups and saucers in her hand, and taking her usual seat at the window, after an embrace from her father, said :—

“ Father, won’t you please to come to the window, and see how God has taken the rain away ? ”—“ Yes, directly.”

“ Won’t you come and take the cover off this cup, and see how God has taken the rain away ? ”

Her father then took a seat by her.

“ Dear father, won’t you read in your Bible to me ? ”

“ Yes—what shall I read about ? ”

“ Read about God.”

“ About God’s doing what ? ”

“ Taking care of *litten* children.” He read, “ It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, to sing praises to thy name, O most High ! ” After a brief

explanation of the meaning of these words, and remarks on how it is good to praise, he added: "Some people think little girls can't understand about God, my daughter."

"I can," she replied instantly.

"What can you understand about him?"

"That he takes care of *litten* children."

"And what else?"

"He says you must punish naughty children."

"Where does he say so?"

"In his holy Bible."

"Do you know enough to say your prayers?"

"Yes sir."

"I am going to say mine now—Come and kneel down with me."

A little girl of about the same age, who had been accustomed to frequent prayer, was one night left in bed a few seconds by one of her parents, who, on returning, said, "Let us ask God to make us good." "I did," said she. "When?" "When you was gone away just now." On waking two or three mornings after, she spoke first and said, "How good God has been, to take care of us, hasn't he? I thanked my good God last night after I came to bed—I didn't speak loud—I spoke softly. Does God know me? Does he know little brother?" "Certainly: He made him, he gave him his eyes, and hands, and feet." "Did He make his merino frock?" "No, mother made that: but she did not make the wool which the frock is made of: that came from a sheep; and who makes sheep?" "God—and the little lambs too, and brother, and mother, and the nurse, and uncle, and all of us.—I want to get up."

## CHAPTER VII.

### A FAMILY ON THE SABBATH.

The father's morning interview with his son—Their prayer, and study of the Scriptures—Principles in religious instruction—Sunday occupations for children—School—Church.

WHAT can be more delightful on earth, than the Sabbath, in a family where every arrangement and practice has been established in conformity with the principles of the gospel? If there be any thing resembling heaven, any thing calculated to excite the loftiest and purest pleasure, it may be looked for in a scene of such a nature. With the name of the Sabbath will become associated, in the minds of the children, ideas of indescribable peacefulness, tranquillity, and joy. What they habitually read in the countenances of their parents, will be transferred to their own breasts; and if their elders really find the Sabbath the happiest day of the seven, value the opportunity it affords to withdraw from worldly thoughts, and to partake of the enjoyments of a better state, all this will be no secret to the little ones, who are such adepts at reading the language of looks and actions.

The father, rising in a devotional frame of mind, on a Sabbath morning, has spent a little time with

books and meditations appropriate to the day, when his child approaches the door : that child is the subject of many thoughts and wishes, and has already been mentioned in prayer this morning.

“ O Father, teach me to train this child for thee ; instruct me how to perform my duty to him now ; open his mind to understand something of thyself ; influence his heart to love thee, through the Redeemer of men.”

Here is no ground for moroseness, or gloom, or coldness of feeling. On the contrary, the Sabbath is the day of hope, and joy, and affection. Those whose hearts and lives are most conformed to the spirit it requires, are the happiest, the only happy persons on earth. The loftiest subjects of contemplation are presented to the mind, familiarity with which exalts and strengthens its powers, more than the study of any human science, even if pursued through life. The love of God and man influences the disposition towards every object ; and thus the Christian becomes the best human teacher. The father too is well prepared for his interesting task. The Bible is open before him, with all its variety of characters and scenes, of instructions and commands, directions, invitations and motives ; and, what is of great importance to the parent, with its own best plans and methods of instruction practically laid down.

The child approaches the door of the apartment in which such preparations are made for his reception, with a sense of what he is there to meet. Experience has taught him that his father's brow is pecu-

liarly serene, on a Sabbath morning ; that his smiles are sweet, his voice tender, his time no less appropriated to his child than on other days. He anticipates the welcome he is to receive, and the pleasure of getting instruction, on subjects which his father well knows how to render intelligible and interesting. His father has shown how much he values the worth of religion, and how sincerely he believes it intelligible to his child, by devoting his time to instruction. And in this respect how different is he from many fathers, who treat their little ones as if they had no intellect worthy of attention ! The son, with these feelings, enters the apartment where his father sits ; he receives his affectionate embrace, is seated on his knee, and his thoughts and feelings are soon directed to heaven by parental love,—that affection with which God compares his own benevolence towards his creatures.

“My dear child,” the father may say, “how kind God is to give us another Sabbath day ! Here we are, all well, with a house to live in, and many good things around us, no noise to disturb us, and the Bible to learn out of ! O, let us try to be better to-day than we ever were in our lives. Father intends to try ; and will you ? I have thanked God once this morning ; but I love to thank Him and pray to Him with my child. He has given us pleasant sleep, and kept us well, and we have a place to thank Him in. Come, let us kneel down.”

Perhaps the child will express reluctance, or be attracted by something he sees through the window ; and if he be quite young his compliance should not be

insisted on. The father may kneel and say aloud :  
“ O God, my father in Heaven, so good and kind to me and my little boy, and his mother, and all of us : I thank God for taking care of us last night, for giving us a home, and clothes, and food, and another holy Sabbath day. Make us good, O Lord, may we do nothing wrong, but grow wise by learning the Bible, and may we help one another to get ready for heaven, and all live there together at last. Love us, O God, and forgive us, because Jesus Christ died for us. Amen.” I have known children after hearing such a prayer, ask to be permitted to pray with the parent.

These petitions may be varied in any degree, and should be suited to circumstances. I would occasionally use some expression from the Scriptures, even though the child might not be expected at first to know exactly what it meant. It is important that the phraseology of our excellent English translation of the Bible should be early familiar to children. They will often find out meanings, by the comparison of word with word in the various parallel expressions they hear ; and it will be our fault if they have not materials afforded, in our daily prayers and instructions, for obtaining such light as they may be able to receive. I would not at first use *thou, thee, art, hast, dost*, or other words which the child never hears in conversation. In early religious exercises and instructions, I would caution the father against using any words not perfectly intelligible, or easily explained and remembered. What should we think, what should we do, if a friend should undertake to teach us something which he considered of immense impor-

tance to us, and should take every third or fourth word out of the Bengalee or Chinese language? Yet this is like what many parents do in teaching children, though they may not realize it. If a word is unknown, and they cannot trace its probable meaning before another and another come up equally unknown, it may be all English, but it is unintelligible to them; and the utmost we can expect of them is, what the little ones so often do, viz., to sit patiently and fix their eyes upon us, while their thoughts are employing themselves as they may, on our dress, or some distant subject.

The father now opens the Bible: or the child, if he has been accustomed to this kind of treatment, will probably say: "Dear father, shall I get you the Bible?" or, "will you please to take me on your lap, and read to me about God?" To such questions it may be replied: "What would you like best to hear of?" or, "what good words do you think I am going to read to you this morning?"

Now the father must expect to be interrupted occasionally by such remarks, questions and exclamations, as will show the nature of the little mind he is teaching. This will by turns surprise and disappoint him: indeed it may sometimes, without proper self-possession, produce a little vexation. But experience, with just views of the nature of children, will prevent such feelings. The parent should never lose sight of the following facts:

1. That the mind of a child begins to seek other occupation when one subject ceases to interest its feelings.

2. External objects make comparatively stronger impressions upon them than upon us.

3. They regard and estimate many things differently from ourselves.

4. They place no constraint upon their expressions. And hence it follows, that,

5. They betray their thoughts and feelings without disguise, which is in itself commendable.

6. As religious things are of far greater interest, when rightly presented, than objects around us or in the street, it is our fault if we do not make them more attractive.

7. Thoughts, questions and language, which might appear ridiculous or inappropriate in an adult, may be sensible, appropriate and grave, in a child.

“I have often been led almost irresistibly to smile at expressions or ideas I have heard in a class of infant Sabbath scholars,” a teacher once said, “when neither the speaker nor any of his little companions were sensible of any thing ludicrous or inappropriate.” Encourage a child to speak what he feels, and let him understand that you are seriously bent on leading him to useful knowledge by an intelligent course; and you will enlist his own exertions, the powers of his own mind, in coöperation with you, without which you can effect nothing, and with which you may, in due time, accomplish what you desire. But, as has been before remarked, the father must practise self-denial. He must sometimes stop at a point familiar to himself, to explain it in full; repeat the same thing over and over; hasten by some subject which does not interest the child, though it be most

agreeable to himself ; and often change topics, style and plan, in compliance with feelings which nature has subjected to frequent change.

There is one thing which the parent should always bear in mind, as it may guide him in many cases of instruction, and encourage his hopes, as well as enable him to perceive his success, in circumstances where he might otherwise be left in doubt, or consider his exertions as useless. Children are more prone than men to observe things in detail. They first notice objects near them, and devote their whole attention for a long time to such as are within their reach. They accustom not their eyes to look at a distant landscape, and have no ideas of the real size or nature of such things as they perceive afar off. It is very difficult to excite interest in them for a distant object, unless it be something like the sun, or moon, which forces itself upon their attention, or some extraordinary phenomenon which attracts other people in an uncommon degree. When we attempt to draw a child away to the contemplation of something beyond his sphere, nature seems to say, "allow him first to become perfect in the lessons appropriate to his age." And here I must introduce a few lines from an elegant passage of an English author.\*

"Take a child to a beautiful meadow, in which we ourselves may stand and gaze with transport from side to side. The green hue is delightful to a child's eye : but the prospect is too vast for his enjoyment. Let him run and gather so insignificant a part of the meadow's production as will fill his little hand : he is

---

\* Early Education, by Miss Appleton.

transported with joy ; and has received, in his way, as full and exquisite enjoyment from a spot a foot in dimension, as we have from the space between heaven and earth, and from a rich scenery of miles.”

Now here is a most beautiful and affecting picture of the mind and feelings of a child acting according to the simple dictates of nature ; and the case supposed is one admirably adapted to afford us many useful hints in our intercourse with our children. But I have introduced it here that I may apply it to that most important branch of education to which this chapter is devoted : instruction in religion. While the father remembers that he is to present his subject in its own natural, interesting form, and that the feelings of the child, as well as his, must be engaged, let him ever bear in mind that the views of the little one cannot be the same as his own. He leads it into a scene abounding in beauty and sublimity, and presenting a variety and extent which he himself does not fully comprehend, but which he cannot survey without admiration and pleasure. He cannot expect the child to participate in all his feelings, for it is incapable of appreciating the beauty of the whole system in one view ; but he can come down to the examination of the parts in detail ; and the art of finding interest in them, and of presenting them at the same time intelligibly and in their natural interest to the child, is a great secret in the instruction of the young.

With these views, then, and thus prepared for his task, it may well appear a most interesting occasion, when the Sabbath arrives, in a well regulated family,

and brings its own peculiar opportunities and facilities for religious instruction. It might be well, were room afforded, to enlarge upon the means by which the child may be interested and taught in all the scenes which the Sabbath presents, in the family and elsewhere. But many of them must be left to the parent's investigation after a few remarks at the close of this chapter.

It would be well if the father should cherish the idea that he is always, but especially on the Sabbath, in a scene as much abounding in sources of pleasure as the richest meadow, or the richest natural landscape: for the world is full of duties, and duties are sources of enjoyment to good men. Whether at worship or instruction, by the fireside or at table, in Sabbath school, at church, or elsewhere, he must recollect that children are seeking knowledge, and are ready to learn and to feel, but in their own way.

Let him impress himself also deeply with the fact, that the feelings may be, and often are, greatly abused by persons ignorant of the proper manner of addressing them. On this subject more will be said in another place, in speaking of death; but here I will remark, that while some persons reward and others threaten or punish, children, to make them attend to religious instruction or observances, if they resort to these means habitually, and chiefly depend upon them, they greatly err. Still more to be discountenanced is the practice adopted by many, of rendering religion a subject of painful interest by exciting ill-defined fears, or other passions not necessarily connected with it. Pains should be taken to prevent any idea of gloom

or harshness, from being associated with religion, its ministers or its professors. Instead of expecting to excite painful interest by directing a child's attention to funerals, and recounting the sufferings of sickness in their hearing, expressing dread of death, or taking them without preparation to gaze on a corpse, the studious endeavor should be to show them, particularly by example, that Christians have triumphed over the fear and the gloom of death, and to fix their minds on the glorious scenes to which it will introduce them.

In whatever the father is employed on the Sabbath amidst his children, he should do as he does while with them at table. While he is gratifying his own wants, he should be supplying theirs. He must not condemn them to total silence, nor expect them to understand or to take interest in all he speaks of to others, nor to sit comfortably or quietly on such seats as accommodate him, nor to possess the same control over their attention or their muscles.

It should be an object of interest to the parent to prevent the Sabbath from appearing to the child as a day of gloom, listlessness, or unpleasant ceremony and restraint. If the parents have a cheerful piety, it will hardly be gloomy ; their looks and voices will spread pleasure among the little ones ; and I can suggest some further means for keeping children appropriately, agreeably, and profitably occupied, on the Sabbath. The common playthings of the week being all removed out of sight, let a set of Scripture prints be produced, of a superior style ; let a map of Palestine be hung where it may be seen, and let it be occasion-

ally referred to, so that Scripture apparatus, Scripture geography and biography, may take the place of other objects and topics. Books relating to other subjects should be carefully excluded and prohibited. There is but one line which can be drawn ; and this should exclude even those religious newspapers which are partly devoted to secular affairs, as they tempt one to indiscriminate reading on the Sabbath, and allow an observer room for doubt whether the reader is conscientious or not. A Bible, and a variety of serious and useful books for different ages, may be cheaply obtained at the present day, so that no parent, unless perhaps those in abject poverty, can be excusable for being destitute of a supply. Even such may be gratuitously furnished by some of the benevolent associations which have done so much for society.

We read the descriptions and remarks of commentators, and examine drawings, to understand some passages of the Scriptures. We even show pictures to our children to aid their imaginations : why might we not resort to other means still more effectual ? We need not hesitate, while telling the story of Noah's flood to a little child, to bring forth a little ark, and even to let him place the beasts in order, with the patriarch and his family at their head ; nor to answer his questions and allow him to handle them, so long as they serve merely as the means of illustration, but no longer. I would even perhaps, in some cases, launch the little ark in water, and let him see it float with all its contents, and should expect in this manner to convey more just and lasting ideas of that passage of Scripture, than in any other, if he had never seen a vessel afloat.

It has often been said, that to forbid the use of all toys on the Sabbath would give a child a distaste for the day. Children value their games and their play-things doubly when they can be turned to some use. I would endeavor, by such expedients as these, to render some of them subservient to the highest objects, and inculcate in every way the idea, that the Sabbath is præeminently the day for improvement, for the employment of the mind, as well as the proper and delightful exercise of the affections ; and one in which children should be most truly like men and women.

Before a child reaches the period when we can occupy its mind with what we might, perhaps prematurely, prefer, there can be no impropriety in giving it toys on the Sabbath. Older children however should be made to understand, that this is allowed only until the little one shall be able to understand the great and interesting things in which they are instructed.

A few days since I had the pleasure of seeing a child to whom the Sabbath seemed to be "a delight." She was accustomed to a system of instruction and discipline nearly conformed to that which is recommended in this volume, particularly in relation to the Sabbath ; but the parents had felt some apprehension lest she might have imbibed a dislike of the day, because she had often inquired what day was coming next, what next to that, &c. until she ascertained how near she was to the Sabbath. She inquired of her mother in the evening, "what day is to-morrow?" "To-morrow will be Monday," was the reply. "I don't want Sunday to go and Monday to come," said she.

Music, being one of the regular daily pleasures and duties of the family, should form an important feature in those of the Sabbath. The parents should occasionally sing a hymn or a stanza, especially whenever any little collision occurs among the children, or any fretfulness is discovered. Evils of this kind may be counteracted by calling them all to join in singing ; and harmony, with the accent and emphasis appropriate to the sense, if carefully cultivated, will do much to prevent and subdue every unbecoming feeling. With due care two or three children may be trained to such familiarity with vocal music, as to sing what they have learnt almost unconsciously, when a single voice has begun it. And what an ornament is this to the fireside ! What a safeguard to the listlessness, indifference, frivolity and ill-nature, which should be ever prohibited from approaching it ! A parent should cultivate music around his hearthstone as he cherishes the elm or the maple at his door, for the ornament and the protection it can afford.

As children are often detained at home during the Sabbath, I would recommend that they be organized for instruction and worship, as in a Sunday School. Every thing of this kind pleases them ; and if conducted with propriety it will be no more puerile than the graver reality is to their elders. Let it be understood that a disposition to play will suspend the employment, and they will probably be attentive and serious. For a number of children, a little gallery, of two or three short benches rising behind each other, may be prepared as the Sabbath apparatus, or one which may be used on other days in a family school.

This may be produced, and the little ones ranged upon it, when something like the following plan may be pursued:

1. A short prayer, 1 minute ;
2. Singing a hymn, 5 minutes ;
3. A few miscellaneous remarks, directions or inquiries, 2 to 5 minutes ;
4. A passage of Scripture read, with familiar questions, explanations, &c. on principles heretofore developed, 15, 20 or 30 minutes, if attention is well kept up ;
5. Exercise by rising and sitting, marching to singing, or movement of the arms simultaneously, 5 minutes ;
6. A review of the lesson by questions, or a pleasing and instructive story (true) by the parent or a child, 5 to 10 minutes ;
7. Another prayer and hymn.

Experience will soon enable the parents to make convenient and useful variations in such a plan ; and every experiment will probably render the exercises more agreeable and instructive. The children should never lose sight of their destiny as Sabbath scholars and Sabbath-school teachers ; and should be allowed, as a mark of approbation, to perform the task of assistant teachers in the domestic school. I would teach the eldest a prayer, and make him sometimes lead the little class in their devotions, kneeling with them, saying a few words at a time, and stopping for the others to repeat them. Such scenes in our infant schools are irresistibly affecting.

Children should be made as comfortable as possible at church. They cannot comfortably sit long in one position, especially on seats made for persons of four times their size. We should never forget what "going to church" is to them. Let us be set on a table five

feet high and four feet wide, with high walls before and behind us, for three or four hours (for time also is longer to them), without permission to see or ability to understand ; certainly it would be poor comfort to tell us, after unspeakable fatigue and endurance, that we were so good we might go again in the afternoon. Children cannot keep from restlessness or slumber in such circumstances, and they should sometimes be lifted up, and laid down, and always kindly treated. If quite small, a few sugar plums may be taken to guard against a turn of crying. If they cannot be so seated on a little high and narrow bench as to look a little about them, they may be allowed to stand on the seat for a short time, and occasionally be held up to see a baptism, the organ, or the choir.

Some persons have thought it better to leave children at home, than to accustom them to hear important truths or solemn petitions without understanding them, lest they should contract a habit of indulging in wandering thoughts during divine service. But it must be remembered, that the habit of staying at home on the Sabbath is quite as dangerous, and that being treated as deficient in intelligence is one of the most effectual means for discouraging the use of our minds. We do not know what ideas a child may receive from the sight of a congregation employed in worship, the solemn sounds of hymns and anthems, or the few words and ceremonies whose meaning they may perceive or conjecture. We do know, however, that they are secure, for so much of their time, from the neglect or bad example of nurses and other persons whom they might see, and the unbecoming

amusements to which they are apt to excite each other when left at home.

In short, the father will find, wherever he turns, the occasions and facilities for education abundant on the Sabbath. He cannot too highly appreciate the advantages of this sacred day to his children as well as himself. And how will he admire the harmonious operation of the means which are thus offered for the improvement of himself and them ! How strikingly will he often see it proved, that every step taken for their instruction teaches him something worth knowing, and that every pure feeling inculcated, and every good habit promoted, in the little ones, enriches his own heart, improves his own character and life ! The more the Sabbath is contemplated in its influence and tendency, the more the wisdom is perceptible by which it was ordained and by which it is rendered effectual ; the better does he understand its nature, and the more readily can he avail himself of the advantages it affords in storing his children's minds, in training their affections, and in preparing them for usefulness and happiness. The more, in short, will he realize the force of that expression of our Saviour which was intended to apply to all classes and ages of the human race :—"The Sabbath was made for man."

Religious instruction in the family is a very interesting, and in some respects a difficult, task. It is a pity that it should in any degree fall into neglect, or fail of being improved in its principles and plan, while Sabbath schools receive such merited attention. Every member of the household should be occupied

in learning the Scriptures in some form suited to his capacities and acquisitions ; and instead of having no family system of instruction for the Sabbath because we have other opportunities for learning, we ought to take advantage of the aid which such opportunities afford.

Rising, therefore, rather earlier than usual, let the family be assembled with as little noise as possible, before breakfast. Proper arrangements should be made on Saturday, to have every thing possible arranged for the Sabbath. Food should be prepared. A cold dinner is better on that day, because we are not so strongly tempted to eat much, nor thus exposed to drowsiness or dulness in worship.

It is a very good practice to give each member of the family a Bible, to require them to be kept carefully in some particular place, and brought to family worship, and to make children and servants read the chapter selected with us, one or more verses each. It is also useful to make each person learn by heart a verse or more of the Bible every day, and to repeat what has been learnt during the preceding day. Such things particularly instruct the young and ignorant, and afford them real improvement.

In some of the principal cities of South America, some of the richest men kneel at church side by side with their slaves, as they say men of all classes are equal in the sight of God. It is certainly proper to treat domestics, at least when engaged in worship, as if we were ourselves abased in the divine presence. Questions may sometimes be put from the Scriptures, to the family or to individuals, and remarks made ;

but they should always be intelligible. Practice will give much facility in this part of the exercises. Singing is a delightful appendage of family worship ; and I think may be advantageously used at the close, as it generally has a greater influence on the feelings of children than prayers not expressly designed for them.

Many servants are desirous of learning to read and write, or of improving in those arts. These may sometimes be made the best means of conveying to them religious knowledge. They may be supplied with slates, and furnished with passages of the Scriptures to copy, by which means they may learn something in spelling, reading and writing, and important truths, at once. They may be requested to bring their slates to the evening service, or the afternoon instruction ; or they may recite the text preached on at church, or give some account of the sermon. The use of slates may seem unnecessary or inappropriate to some readers. The ignorant and young are not accustomed to continued abstract meditation. Objects of sight, and hearing, and touch, are constantly attracting their attention. They have, besides, a natural propensity to be occupied : to perform some part in whatever they are expected to take interest. The wisest and oldest feel not a little of these traits of humanity ; and the services of the sanctuary, not to speak of the whole range of duty, are so planned as to afford each occupation.

A child of about three years and six months once came in with a slate which it was accustomed to use on other days, and said, " Father, won't you please

to write me something good this pleasant Sunday morning?" The father resolved to make an experiment, which he afterwards spoke of as successful. "What shall I write, my child?" "Write a picture about the Bible." He opened at the 1st. Chapter of Genesis, read a verse or two, and then stopped to draw figures of the earth, the sun and moon, grass, trees, plants, &c. The child expressed great interest in it, and particularly in making more stars and grass, putting flowers and seeds on the plants, &c. Then came a variety of animals, fish and birds, the garden of Eden, the rivers, &c. In the ten minutes which this lesson occupied, the child obtained more correct, vivid, and lasting impressions concerning the creation, than the mere hearing of the story many times would have given. On the following Sabbath, the child at the same hour made a request to receive the same lesson.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PLAYTHINGS, SPORTS, AMUSEMENTS AND EXERCISE.

They should be connected with something useful, as far as possible—Exciting games to be avoided—Kites, connected with useful principles—Games of chance to be shunned—Small mechanical and agricultural tools for children—The care of domestic animals and fowls—Humane feelings thus to be fostered—A knowledge of natural history, drawing, &c. to be substituted for cruel field sports—Walking—Riding on horseback—Health injured by injudicious treatment at school.

PLAYTHINGS, sports, and games, should always be connected with some useful end, if possible ; and this can be done more frequently, more easily, and more effectively, than is commonly supposed. The first care should be to guard against every evil tendency. The time may come when good men may devote due attention to the improvement of toys and games for children : there is room for the exercise of much ingenuity, talent and learning, which if well exerted would produce great effects. Until the toyshops and bookstores are better supplied with objects appropriate to children, the good father must use his own judgment in selecting and inventing. It will be needless to warn most parents against the demoralizing amusements connected with cruelty to animals, imitating executions, &c., but the use of military toys is

so common, that many put them into their children's hands without reflecting on their bad tendency.

The principles of peace should be early and deeply implanted : otherwise we cannot pretend to have trained our children up in the principles of the Gospel. The example of our Saviour is the only one which we can place before our own and their eyes, without some caution against a perfect conformity. A friend of peace is of course a philanthropist ; and on them what a benediction is pronounced ! While we withhold toy guns, swords, and drums, from the hands of children, we must show an indifference to military shows, speak of them in their true light, and endeavor to afford them more attractive and harmless amusements whenever they occur. Particularly should they be trained to a different musical taste, and furnished with instruments of a different nature, more favorable to feelings of kindness and humanity.

Games of all kinds which offer room for powerful excitement should at least be watched over with caution. Some games at ball may partake of this character, although when used in moderation they may be very pleasing and useful. Kites, when flown without exposing horses to fright, or other risks, may be recommended for boys of ten, twelve, or other ages. They lead to an acquaintance with an ingenious manufacture, if the children be left to make their own kites. They also introduce the young to the power, changes, and other properties of the wind ; direct the mind to the combination and resolution of forces, the strength and lightness of materials, and other subjects of great importance in mechanics and

natural philosophy; while they have little tendency to excite rivalry or animosity between playmates. "I reflect on my kite-making and kite-flying days with interest," once remarked a father—"I remember the admiration I felt on arriving at some of the philosophical principles connected with the subject; and the stimulus given to my ingenuity by the success of my experiments. I recollect the sublimity presented by the sky when I gazed at it after comparing the probable distance of the sun above my kite, and particularly the awe which struck me when it had disappeared from my view one evening, while I stood holding the string, as the stars began to shine." Such impressions as these I should wish every boy might in some way or other receive. They are often lasting, and may be very useful even in manhood.

Games of chance, as they are called, are dangerous, on account of the acrimony which they often produce, and the principle which renders them interesting—that of one's own success. This is a selfish feeling, and should be counteracted instead of being encouraged. Perhaps most of the gamblers in the world began by playing what are called the harmless games of chance. A youth was once early advised never to learn to play cards, and obeyed. He had afterwards abundant reason to be thankful for a caution, and to approve the parental sagacity, which pointed out the manner in which his ignorance might in such a case prove useful. He was sometimes solicited to complete a card party, but found his excuse was always sufficient: no one coveted the task of teaching him.

Chess has been often recommended for its influence

in turning the mind to attention, foresight, ingenuity, &c. It draws up the heart within a narrow sphere, and that a selfish one ; it occupies time with what is confessedly of no use ; and yet affords no relaxation, no aid to restore the wearied powers of the body or the mind. All these games have more or less of the same exclusive and narrowing influence on the feelings and the thoughts, and tend to satisfy one who is much devoted to them, with a very low standard of excellence. Who has ever known a skilful player at drafts, chess, ninepins, &c. without finding him disposed to underrate productive labor, intelligent reading and conversation, or something else of real value ? It is important to avoid the introduction of such games into a family ; for if the habit of playing them be not formed in early life, it is generally not formed at all ; and, when once a game is learnt, it is not easily forgotten, but the person will ever be exposed to contract a foolish devotion to it, and even to the further abuse of it by gambling. It will be the fault of the parent if the children ever feel the want of interesting subjects so strongly as to resort to such amusements : for the young may be said to have no predisposition for them.

The principle of rivalry is to be traced in many other amusements, and is always to be avoided. Wherever it is found to be the moving spring of excitement, there will always be danger : indeed whatever children are stimulated to do, by the desire of victory alone, they should not be permitted to do at all. Many a youth is made a fop or a fool by riding or

driving horses, to be seen and admired. If a game at ball becomes noisy, the judicious father will not delay to appear among the party at once, and propose bathing, or the flying of a kite, or the exhibition of a *camera obscura*, or an excursion among the fields in pursuit of plants or stones, or at least to tell a "true story."

A child may make much progress in the elements of writing and drawing, if allowed to have a slate and pencil among its playthings, and occasionally furnished with a bit of smooth paper and a lead or colored pencil. He will make a great many marks, and go over the ground unaided which so many children have to go over at school. A great part of the art of writing consists in the practice of the hand. The forms of letters may soon be learnt after this has been acquired. In some schools slates are first given to write upon; and writing in sand with a stick or the finger is extensively and successfully practised in Lancasterian schools. The New York city public schools excel in writing, because these methods are used in them; and slates or blackboards and chalk may be well introduced into families.

One of the best sorts of toys for boys is a set of mechanics' tools, beginning with the safest at four or six,—such as a little hammer and nails, beetle and wedges, gimlet, &c. with bits of wood, boards, blocks, &c. to use them on, and a glue-pot. A fine brass-backed saw, which is not apt to cause any injury, and is easily managed, may be added at a proper age, or a little saw and jack for sawing sticks of fire wood, a little plane, work bench, bevil, square and rule.

Even brad-awls, a drill, augur, drawing knife, lathe, &c. may be provided when it appears that they will be cautiously used ; and perhaps other tools besides. The art of staining, painting and coloring wood, may be inquired into ; and indeed almost any useful branch of handicraft may be pursued at proper times and under proper restrictions. It will help to restrain the boy from wandering in search of occupation, and exposure to bad company ; and perhaps many times the cost of the articles may be saved in consequence. A place to deposit them should be provided, and they should be kept in order.

These are occupations chiefly for within doors ; and very delightful are they to a boy, as many can testify. Boys are too often forced to supply themselves with tools, and become disheartened by the difficulty. I would recommend to fathers in the country, to furnish also agricultural employments for their sons. The care of domestic animals, fowls, &c. is the source of much pleasure to children, and will be useful to them, especially if proper pains be taken by parents to render it so. It is only by frequent personal inspection that we can form an acquaintance with the habits of animals ; and this is a branch of knowledge important to us in several respects. On it we must build our knowledge of zoology, as we must that of agriculture on our practical observations, acquaintance with the ground, its tillage and productions. If there are several brothers in a family of suitable ages, they may have different branches of work, or daily cares, which may sometimes be exchanged, if desirable. Each one will thus realize his

own usefulness, and find occupation for his thoughts, whenever otherwise unemployed. With a little wheelbarrow, spade and rake, boys will perform some useful work in a garden or yard. Consciousness of uselessness seems to degrade as well as to discourage the mind. Want of respectable business deprives a child, as well as a man, of such a refuge from vexations as we require. A child does not like to fret ; but will often turn to some new occupation to relieve itself of the painful irritation. It is, generally speaking, only when no attractive resort is presented, that it continues unreasonable.

“ It would hardly be believed,” said a gentleman, “ if I should tell how much pleasure, and how much useful occupation for the mind, I found in going to pasture with a cow while a boy. I had a pleasant employment always waiting for me when I waked, rose cheerfully and early, breathed the fresh air, was invigorated by the exercise, cheered by the thought of doing something useful, had my feelings placed in a sweet state of tranquillity by the appearance of the fields, and the gentle disposition of the animal of which I had the care, while my mind was elevated by the aspect of the morning sky. I remember the feelings with which I used to say, ‘ I have been to pasture !’ There was more in these few words than I knew how fully to express, but not more than I could feel. Beside this, at different periods, generally at my own solicitation, I had the care of a horse, a calf, a few sheep, fowls of various kinds, pigeons, &c. Even feeding of pigs is better than doing nothing ; and so I found it, when, having become heartily weary of

having no employment in a city, I went to spend a few months on a farm at ten years of age, and was permitted to have this most humble charge."

It is shocking to think what barbarities are sometimes committed by children, when led on to disregard and to make sport of the torments of the inferior animals. Every approach to this I would endeavor to prevent; and perhaps one of the best means is, early to familiarize children with domestic animals, fowls, &c. for which they will easily acquire a fondness. Their minds being directed to their wants and natures, they will learn what is likely to give them pleasure or pain, and by all this, feelings of humanity will be fostered. The farmer, who has the care of cattle, is generally the last person to distress a brute, and the first to feel for its sufferings, even if it be the property of a stranger.

Probably some sportsmen are more attracted to the fields and streams by the beauties of nature than a love of destroying life: but the father should take care to provide his sons with the knowledge of nature in her various works, in which sportsmen are generally deficient. A little acquaintance with botany and mineralogy, even though the science of brutes, birds, fish, insects and shells, should not be understood, will afford ample occupation for a mind inclined to solitude and tranquillity: and a habit of sketching from nature will give an interest even to the most common scene, while it will redouble the enjoyment of wild and rural beauties. Walking is a cheap, natural and invigorating exercise; and there is no good reason why we should not both esteem and practise it as much as the

English. Riding on horseback is still more healthful in many cases ; and, when properly practised, one of the finest kinds of exercise for both sexes. Unfortunately it is almost disused among us now, except for display ; yet there can be no doubt that it is much more conducive to health, and usually affords many more opportunities of rational enjoyment, than the luxurious steamboats and railroad cars in which so many thousands are transported about our country. A timely journey on horseback to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Falls of Niagara, the West or the South, might prevent the necessity of many a winter's exile in a foreign land, where our invalids are usually disappointed both in the climate and in the accommodations they find.

Useful exercise then may be very cheaply used ; and as agreeable company is one of the strongest enhancements of a pleasant ride, walk, or piece of manual work, the child should be early trained to sensible conversation while engaged in exercise. But as this subject is elsewhere dwelt on somewhat at large, it is only hinted at in this place.

The health of many persons has doubtless been seriously injured, by their long confinement at school on inconvenient seats, by stooping over their desks, and the want of necessary bodily exercise. All this is avoided in good infant schools, and more or less so in those of the Lancasterian class.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AMUSEMENTS—*continued.*

Witnessing useful labor—Learning useful arts—Instrumental music  
—Story of a boy who visited a fife maker—Manual labor.

Boys should be permitted to witness the operation of various trades, and active, useful employments. More may arise from it than can possibly be foreseen. The mere mention of this subject may awaken in the minds of some fathers many very pleasant recollections. Boys have often enjoyed more than they can describe, while standing beside the turners, the carpenters, the masons, and stone cutters, &c. with whom they are brought in contact. What pleasant moments may they spend in wandering about the solitary but busy lofts of mills, or in watching the operation of the domestic loom in some retired hovel! In the fine mornings, in Spring, they love to observe the movements of the fishermen with their nets, and rejoice with them in their prizes; or to follow the ploughman through the fresh furrow, and hear his wisdom on crops and seasons.

If I had no further object in view, than to secure agreeable amusement to the sons of those fathers who may read this book, I should feel that I was acting the part of a kind friend to them in recommending that such opportunities should be allowed to children. In-

deed, I would recommend that they should be studiously thrown in their way. And many objects may sometimes be connected with these. Suppose a father wishes to introduce his son to a poor, but well regulated mechanic's family in the neighborhood, to teach him respect for the honest and intelligent of another sphere in life. He perhaps may first show him some of the effects of his skill to inspire him with respect. Or the boy may feel interested in instrumental music, and the father would make this disposition subservient to an useful object. Most children, according to my recollection, feel inclined to one amusement after another, and will pay devoted attention even to subjects apparently above their age, while the spirit of inquiry lasts. The reason why they do not more frequently employ themselves about matters of real importance, and such as occupy the serious attention of men, I believe is, that they cannot do it without appearing to encroach upon the sphere of their elders, or because they are allowed no opportunity or means for becoming acquainted with it. The taste of a set or society of boys is apt to run together. Some commanding member occasionally suggests or presents a new subject, in which they are apt all to engage until they become weary, or encounter some obstacle or discouragement. They incite each other by example, conversation, and coöperation. The favorite topic becomes a matter of consultation, plans and experiments, whenever the youthful companions meet, and employs their thoughts at home, at school, and sometimes in dreams. A powerful competition between different powers is thus often created,

favorable to the developement of talent, which if properly directed, may be led to useful ends. Misapplied, robbing orchards or hen-roosts, playing truant, and all the corrupting and dangerous consequences connected with juvenile criminality, are to be apprehended. This particular point however deserves a separate consideration. We may suppose the interest of a boy strongly awakened about music. He grows fond of sweet sounds, and desires an instrument with which he can produce them.

Multitudes of children have displayed much ingenuity on dandelion stems and squash vines, by making two or more accord, or by cutting holes in them in imitation of a flute; and then, unable to proceed farther, have renounced the musical art thus far successfully and creditably pursued. Perhaps the joint of a reed has been converted into a wind instrument, by some exercise of ingenuity and perseverance, equal to that which would enable a man to build a house or a ship.

Let us suppose a boy who has gone through these grades. He is shown a fife; and on comparing its finished appearance and effects with his own work, secretly admires the superior powers of a man. He endeavors to imagine how so surprising a work could have been accomplished; and having had no sagacious and kind friend to take him to a workshop, has no idea of the tools or processes by which any similar task can be performed. He seeks some material of which to form an imitation; and what use may he find for his judgment, observation and perseverance, before he obtains his desire in respect to this or to the

manner of employing it ! Now suppose him to have discovered the refuse materials of a fife-maker. He finds none suited to his purpose, but observes the marks of tools upon them, which satisfy him that the man has means at his disposal of which he can form no idea. Here he attempts to judge from effects to causes, which is an improving exercise to the mind. At length he gains access to the shop, observes the logs of box wood as they first come in the hands of the manufacturer ; and the various tools and furniture, some of which he sees in use, and of others he for a time is left to conjecture the application. He stands attentive, and speechless. A child is almost always so in such a case. The mind is engrossed with learning through the eyes, and has no use for the tongue, feet or hands. Here is agreeable and beneficial employment for the mind for a considerable time. You do not hear his conjectures at the use of this or that tool, but it is not of course to be presumed that he has made none. He perhaps sees some strange instrument, which he had supposed to be of no use, suddenly called into requisition to perform some duty, short and occasional perhaps, yet indispensable, and makes no exclamation of surprise or gratification : yet he may experience both in a high degree. A fife is finished, and he sees that he can understand the whole process, which he admires from beginning to end. Here are thought and skill displayed in every step : evident, deep thought, and admirable skill. He is no longer obliged to look upon the work as above his comprehension, or inimitable by him. On the contrary, every remark he makes encourages

him to extend his inquiries still farther, and to redouble his exertions in the task he so rudely began. He sees that this wonderful effect of skill has been owing to the patient exercise of exactly such powers as he possesses, and has been exerting, and for a time feels able to accomplish any thing within the reach of human power.

It is not to be wondered at, that every thing connected with the scene of so much enjoyment should appear to him agreeable ; the mechanic, his manners, his cheerful song, his light step, the sound of his tools, and particularly of the instrument he has fabricated. His mind dwells upon these discoveries perhaps for days and weeks. He makes new experiments : but finding from time to time that he has superficially observed one thing after another, he seizes frequent opportunities to inspect the apparatus over and over again. At length he has become master of the principles of the lathe, as well as of more simple machines ; and now, who can reckon up the labors or the success of his mind in its reiterated remarks and reflections, and the importance of such a process of spontaneous self-training ; or who can foresee the results to which this knowledge and this self-discipline may conduct him ? The mind is so complex in its structure, that the associations formed in the midst of these circumstances, it may be impossible to discover ; but whoever is acquainted with the infantile mind, will perceive that they may have been very important.

The boy may possibly succeed in finishing some coarse instrument like a fife, on which he can play.

It will of course be inferior to one of the manufacturer's ; but he will question whether any body could make a better fife with his tools ; or he will inquire, who could not make a complete one in the shop.

It is a mistaken idea which some people have, that the prying disposition children often show with respect to the employments of men and women, arises merely from foolish curiosity, or a meddlesome or ambitious spirit. The young too are often unjustly charged with evil or mischievous designs, in handling or trying experiments with objects whose nature or uses they do not comprehend, or wish to test.

There is another view in which this subject may very properly be regarded. Children are often desirous of understanding the springs of society. They see a variety of movements carried on around them, by their elders and parents, in which great interest is displayed, and the results of which they perceive are sometimes satisfactory, sometimes productive of disappointment, and sometimes of great pleasure. Here is a constant source of curiosity presented to them ; and their wish to understand why these things are regarded as so important, what those exertions are aimed at, and what they effect, is a perfectly reasonable one, and should be gratified as far as may be. It would give a child an unfavorable, or at least a suspicious opinion of a parent's character, to see him occupied daily and yearly about something of no good, or possibly of an evil tendency ; but a child is liable to consider his father's employments as being of such a nature, if he is not instructed in them. I knew a boy who for some years was inclined to be-

lieve that his father's profession, that of law, was inconsistent with the character of an honest man, because he had heard it misrepresented, and did not understand its nature. How much influence may a parent thus sacrifice, ignorantly perhaps, through want of giving a few simple explanations on the circumstances of life, and the nature of a profession or trade! Besides, a child, early initiated into some of the grand principles of society, the mutual dependence of mankind, the true tendency of sloth and labor, the modes and means of displaying virtue, &c. &c., has great advantages in arriving in due season at maturity in judgment on important subjects. His mind is not checked by encountering seeming mysteries on every side, and is not forced into the conclusion that things go on in society without settled rules, or fixed designs. The contrary belief is calculated to accustom him to acting without method, and living, as it were, from hand to mouth, on the employments and enjoyments which he finds presented from day to day. May we not account for the useless lives and the frivolous occupations of many of the children of rich parents, partly on this principle? The poor become introduced to an acquaintance with some of the moving springs of society by necessity. They see and feel the value of useful labor: work is paid for on the spot; and they run with the money to buy bread. Sometimes, while very young, they hear of the difficulty of obtaining money, the uses to which it might be applied, &c., and are often better prepared to act upon sound principles of what is called political economy.

at ten years of age, than others are at twenty, or even at threescore.

An acquaintance with different trades and processes in common life, is of importance also, even to one who never resorts to the practice of them, as furnishing him with useful practical facts, and materials for conversation. How often questions relating even to common operations arise in intelligent society, which it would be interesting or useful to solve ; and how often are miscalculations made in important concerns, through errors in the ground on which our presumptions are founded, as the cost of materials, the wages of labor, the enhancement of value caused by manufacture, the principles on which the supply and price of an article affect each other in market, and other points innumerable.

But to return to our little fife-maker. He began his career merely by singing, and was led by a natural progress to seek as a more convenient substitute for his voice, an instrument which would correct notes by a mechanical operation. This he was gratified to find in the hollow vegetable stems around him ; but aiming at greater perfection he was brought to an acquaintance with a variety of materials, tools, and processes, till his mind was stored with many useful facts, and improved by many strong and successful exertions. In subsequent years, whenever his thoughts turned to music, he found the benefit of the attention he had so early paid to harmony ; when any curious specimen of workmanship was presented to his view, he reverted to the various planes, saws, hammers, lathes, &c. which might have been used in making it, some of which

he had become acquainted with at the fife-maker's ; and when the hardness of any kind of wood, or the qualities of metals were to be considered, he often inquired of himself how they would probably have yielded to the tools he had there seen employed.

It might be needless to carry this subject farther. This simple anecdote is not a mere fiction, as might be supposed : the circumstances mentioned actually occurred some years ago in a country town, and the author well knew the little boy alluded to in early and later life.

Children must always be learning, as well as men. This is a truth to be remembered. To provide them with harmless occupations and subjects of attention, is very important : and if we can, at the same time, give them such as may prove useful in several different ways, the object is still more important. In Spain it has long been the fashion for men of wealth, and even rank and title, to educate their sons with a knowledge of some branch of useful labor, that they might, under any reverse, be able to procure an honest support. And how much misery might have been saved to unfortunate men and their families, as well as how many gloomy anticipations to such as have apprehended poverty, if they had had it in their power to employ their time in some honest art, and earn the means of life.

I might even appeal to fathers who desire most of all to have their children provided with wealth. Would you think it a very desirable object to secure a sum of money for your son ? Perhaps it might be lost by some accident, or squandered, if he had no

regular occupation for his time, or no experience in gaining money to teach him its value. Have you ever reflected sufficiently on the pecuniary worth of a trade which brings in \$300 or \$600 a year ? The former is as good as \$5,000 at six per cent. interest, and the latter as \$10,000. The employment of an industrious man also inclines him to economy, regular habits, self-improvement, philanthropy, and in many other ways hedges in his path against vice, poverty and sorrow. "The man," says the Jewish Talmud, "who does not teach his son some mechanical trade, is as bad as if he had taught him to be a highwayman." And by much higher authority than this we are taught to regard useful labor in all its forms, with respect. One would think that the example of some of the holy men and women of the old Testament, and that of the apostles and the Saviour, would have impressed this subject more generally upon the minds of Christian parents than we find it has. But no : we too generally regard it both as useless and impossible to teach a child a business which he is not likely to practice ; and, what is much worse, we often countenance the idea that the knowledge of it, (especially if a thorough knowledge,) would be disgraceful. Such false notions children do not possess except when they have derived them from their elders ; and if we would allow them to follow the bent of their inclinations in regard to this subject, we should often do them a present kindness, and a lasting benefit. We should avoid the necessity of punishing them for offences which we sometimes almost compel them to commit, by withholding agreeable occupation from them ; and at

the same time store their minds with good habits, and useful facts for future use.

Boys should be educated with a practical acquaintance with manual labor, and a respect for the employment, and for those, otherwise deserving of respect, who are devoted to it.

Almost every father may find opportunities to perform some kind of useful labor, at least occasionally, in the presence of his children. If he can do it daily, it will be the better for his own health and enjoyments, and for the recommendation of it to them. Let them see that you esteem it respectable, agreeable and useful, and you have already prejudiced them in its favor. If, on the contrary, you neglect it, or proceed to it occasionally with reluctance, or with an unwillingness to be seen engaged in it by others, or under-rate such as perform it, all your arguments in its favor will be weakened or lost on them.

All know very well how opposed are the views and practices of fashionable people to real work, and how unwilling many parents will be to listen to such advice for their sons; but observation teaches us too plainly what are the effects on the body, mind and heart, usefulness in life, and enjoyment of various kinds, for us to pass over so important a part of the education of children. Children are fond of work, and will often feel truly grateful to those who will place simple agricultural or mechanical implements in their hands. They will not work always, perhaps not long or regularly: but they will return to it frequently, and may both do and gain good by their labors. We may fairly judge of others by what we can recall of ourselves and our associates.

I once knew a boy who was allowed to spend his hours out of school in such harmless sports as he chose. But though with his playmates daily, he often was pained with the reflection, in the midst of a game, that there was no useful permanent object to be gained by it; and this was often so bitter a reflection to him, especially towards the close of the week, when he looked back on his past amusements, that he was ready to renounce his sports in disgust. It was an opinion he expressed in mature life, that if he could have had access to some means of doing useful work, his feelings would often have inclined him to employ them, and thus he might have accomplished a great deal during his early years.

If this opinion is confirmed by any father, on recurrence to his own experience, he will probably deem it an object of interest to provide useful work for his children. Daughters are usually better furnished on this score than sons: that is, they may more easily find useful employments and healthful exercise. It would be a happy thing for many boys, if they could resort at pleasure to some substitute for needlework and knitting, which have made many an evening pass in usefulness and peace, without interrupting conversation and reading; or if their time could be as systematically divided as theirs is by domestic cares and healthful labors. Happy would it be also for females, if foolish fashion did not so extensively lead mothers and daughters to look on such employments as degrading, and to make them give place to the more truly degrading employments of heartless and frivolous society.

## CHAPTER X.

### FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

The knowledge possessed by children—Allowance to be made for their ignorance of language, irritability, &c.—Corporal punishments—Punishments in general—Regular hours and habits—Dangers of young men—Precautions.

WITH respect to the government or discipline of a family, some important points are to be regarded. Almost every other plan will be thwarted if there is not a proper submission to authority. And this will not be secured where it is not properly exercised. This cannot be said to be done where children are treated as if they were different beings from what they are. Some parents err by presuming that their children know less, or more, than they do; or have worse or better dispositions than they have; or less or more command over their minds or feelings. Some place too much reliance on force, others on kindness; some change their plans frequently, others have no plans at all, but notice or pass over faults, blame and approve, according to their own feelings at the moment. Many unteach by example faster than they instruct by precept. There are several points which ought to be particularly regarded.

In respect to such things as come fairly within the

scope of their minds, children are often equal, and sometimes superior, to men, in forming clear and just opinions. By noticing the actions, looks and words of their elders, they frequently show great sagacity in penetrating motives and discovering inconsistencies.

It is therefore hazardous to attempt to appear under any disguise in their presence; and very unsafe to calculate much on their want of knowledge or discrimination. Their power of distinguishing between right and wrong, in circumstances not above their comprehension, is generally more clear and unbiassed, than that of older persons. Their perception of the nature of truth, is often astonishingly exhibited: for the Almighty has conferred upon them a lively conscience, and they have not yet warped or deadened it by intercourse with the world, or frequent violations of duty. A parent should never presume that a child can be ignorant of the nature of falsehood, or the difference between it and truth, in a plain and simple case, unless he has been accustomed to hear fictitious tales narrated as true, or encouraged to fabricate them for the amusement of others. I have seen cases in which I thought children had been thus led to confound truth and falsehood. With regard to the ignorance of children; of a thousand causes and effects, tendencies and consequences, which are obvious to us, they are ignorant. It is also important to bear in mind their imperfect acquaintance with language. The purport of words is often different as used by adults and by children; and there are multitudes of which the latter are necessarily ignorant. I have often listened to the conversation of older per-

sons while a child, without the power of discovering the subjects of which they were speaking.

“I have repeatedly found,” once remarked a man, recurring to his early years, “the questions or requirements of my elders and teachers entirely unintelligible, on account of some unknown word, so introduced as to cause a chasm in the sense; and I can recall instances in which I have been supposed to be wilfully perverse, because I did not answer questions or obey directions which I could not comprehend. Children, I am persuaded, are often greatly at a loss for words, when they wish to give explanations of their own conduct or intentions. I have suffered exceedingly when young from this cause. I have been agitated at school, by a sudden inquiry, or a frown, or a threat, or a false suspicion, and rendered unable to give any intelligible explanation. Words sometimes escape the memory of a child, which he has before used; and especially is this likely to be the fact in a state of agitation.

“I may add here, that some boys have an insuperable natural difficulty to overcome, when particular feelings are strongly excited; and instead of being fit subjects for punishment, deserve compassion, and peculiarly judicious treatment. I can hardly recal any thing with more painful recollections, than such scenes which I have passed through. A choking sensation was suddenly to be felt in my throat, which I presume must have been produced by a spasm, and my utterance was effectually checked. Every method resorted to to force or to shame me into a confession, or a promise of obedience, or indeed anything else,

seemed but to increase the difficulty ; and every exertion I made to overcome it, both discouraged and weakened me ; while, by increasing the excitement of my feelings, it added still farther to the distressing impediment. My breath was often so nearly suppressed, that I have had serious expectations of losing it entirely ; and the pain in the chest and the laboring of the lungs seemed to bring me to the borders of convulsions. Indeed I can well recall cases in which I have been reduced to such a state of suffering, that I was indifferent to every measure resorted to or threatened ; and nothing was necessary but strength, to have led me to some deed of violence to rid myself of those who were unconsciously only my persecutors. Whenever I see an irritable child brought to this condition in the streets, I am filled with compassion, and always interfere for his relief."

I have said so much on this subject, because, from what I have seen, I am disposed to believe, that many an excitable temper is almost ruined by injudicious treatment ; and to persuade fathers who have such sons to be very cautious in their discipline.—Never press such a feeling beyond a certain point. When the veins swell, and the breath becomes violently impeded, when the chest heaves with an unnatural force, and the voice is lost, pity the poor boy, who may have done wrong in giving way to passion, but has now a physical cause acting upon him which he cannot resist, and who would gladly submit to any thing to relieve himself of an intolerable distress. Change your method at once ; let him know that you understand his situation ; sooth and divert him ;

remove him especially from the observation of others, and the spasm, (for I can call it nothing else,) will subside. Then you may calculate on his gratitude. He will probably be submissive to every thing reasonable. You may also take occasion to represent to him the ill effects of not habitually governing his temper; and whenever you see it rising in future, caution him in season to control it before it gets the mastery over him.

It is of great consequence to every person through life, to believe that he can control his passions; and whatever child is brought up in the belief that, when suddenly excited, his anger must have way, will be a dangerous member of society. Such ideas are entertained by numbers, in whom they prevent any attempts at self-control. In the temper, perhaps as much as in any thing, we are influenced by the examples we see in early life.

"When I first feel angry," once said a passionate boy, "I am not afraid of any body; and I would strike my father if he stood in my way—it is natural to me—I can't help it; my father was just so too." This boy in a few years was brought to the grave by a vice which ordinary self-government would have prevented.

Corporal punishments, as most parents will allow, should be but seldom inflicted. While their efficacy has been overrated by many, and underrated by some, they are undoubtedly often made worse than none at all; and yet they are capable of being used, in particular cases and in a proper manner, with good results, when other means have failed. The Scriptures rep-

resent punishment as a strange work to our Heavenly Father. Every judicious parent will endeavor to render punishment of any kind unnecessary ; but yet will not shrink from administering it when duty imperiously requires. A vast number of punishments of all kinds might have been spared to children, by proper attention in consulting their wants and comforts ; and many which have been injudiciously applied, had better never have been resorted to.

1. A young child should not be punished for every fretful expression. Soothing words, an embrace, a new and pleasant object of attention, will often suppress rising irritability ; and against the first appearances of evil the parents should be ever watchful. These are the young shoots of disaffection, anger, hatred, violence, disobedience, profanity and murder, and should be suppressed as early as possible. Some parents seem to think, that the evil passions are most effectually destroyed, by exciting them in their children, or allowing them to proceed to a great length, and then applying some severe punishment. It would be far better, if we could keep the young from ever experiencing these violent emotions, and habituate them to quench the first stirrings of bad temper. The child must be his own chief disciplinarian through life, and the art of self-government must be taught him, as a regular part of his education, and that both by precept and example. Not a hasty expression, not a step, nor a motion, nor a look, ought ever to be seen in the parent, indicative of passion. The constant study of a model of self-possession in a father, or a mother, will

do more to control the temper of a child, than any series of punishments.

2. Every instance of disobedience should not be punished, though every wilful refusal to obey a parent should be. I can give my views on this point best in the language of a highly respected friend. "I once thought," said he, "that instantaneous obedience should be required of my children : but I found that the little ones could not be brought in every instance to comply at once with my commands. If I say 'pick up that key,' to a child of three or four, while engaged with something else, it will often stand and look at me : 'pick up that key'—it stands still—'pick up that key'—the third or fourth time, it may be, I am obeyed. Now is this wilful disobedience ? The child looks at me, from first to last, without passion, and perhaps even with smiles and confidence. No—I think rather that its mind is occupied with another subject, and does not readily change it. Besides, a child is sometimes unable to discover, whether the parent is in earnest or in sport, and its own feelings strongly incline it to the latter. If, however, after time has been given for it to fix its attention, and to perceive that I am in earnest, it proves stubborn and resolute in disobedience, I calmly warn it against the evil spirit that is rising, its tendency, the offence against God and myself, and the punishment that must follow ; and last of all comes the punishment. With an older child I should make less allowance, especially if I had trained it properly before."

3. The most harsh punishments are not of course the most effectual—often quite the contrary. A child,

gently trained by a gentle parent, receives the most poignant wounds through the heart. I have seen a slight expression of disapprobation from such a parent produce a flood of tears in a young child; and many instances are on record, in which the mild reproof or the silent tear of a good parent, has pierced the feelings of much older children. The love of his parent and his Maker should be the leading strings of a child, and the fear of losing it a sufficient motive to deter them from evil. When these fail, however, as they often will, especially while parents are far from perfection in exercising government, punishments must be resorted to, and gratifications must be denied; as by the removal of playthings, confinement to a corner, to a room, or in fine weather, to the house, temporary banishment from the table, or the society of playmates. These, and the denial of instruction on some interesting subject, may be resorted to, and should be successively tried, with well-timed expostulations, and friendly exhortations to struggle against the evil propensity. The child should be taught that all persons have wrong feelings by nature, but that they may be overcome, with great exertion, and the help of God; that the parent has thus overcome them, and that such and such good people have resorted to such and such means with success. Every favorable opportunity should be taken to read to the child in the Scriptures, to pray with it, and induce it to pray for itself; and the knowledge that it is ardently and affectionately prayed for, will be very likely to melt it into penitence. After the feelings have been

soothed by means like these, even if the temper be not entirely subdued, it may be well sometimes to allow the child to retire, and engage in some tranquilizing employment; or to fall asleep, which will probably restore that self-control which he has perhaps hardly strength to exercise after this agitation.

4. Nothing should be used as a punishment which a child ought to like, or ought readily submit to in other circumstances. "If you do not say your prayers," a mother was heard to say to her little daughter one evening in a steamboat, "you shall take a dose of castor oil and salts!" Many parents injudiciously shut children in dark or lonely places, when they have superstitious fears, or are likely to have them. Such remedies are worse than almost any disease: I mean, a resort to them is more dangerous, than the neglect to punish common offences.

5. Corporal punishments are sometimes necessary, but they lose their effect by frequent application and at the same time deaden those feelings which should be fostered. They should produce short but real pain. A blow with the hand upon a child's head may stupify without stinging, and may produce lasting injury. The bones are tender and small, and a light rod is safer than the hand. Whether corporal punishments should be inflicted on the spot, or after some delay, has been debated. They should never be inflicted by a person in a passion. I have heard of a child of three, corrected with much apparent effect, after a lapse of some hours, an admonition and a prayer, with acquiescence on its own part, because it had done what such punishment had been

threatened for. I would however seldom threaten such whipping; for in such a case it might have been dispensed with but for the threat. The long anticipation of such punishment increases its severity many fold; so that it may thus become greatly disproportioned to the offence. When however the offence has been very aggravated, such an enhancement of it may be most judicious.

6. Children should be obedient—must be obedient, habitually and cheerfully so, or they cannot be well educated in any respect.

7. Habits of truth and honesty, of reverence for parents, the aged, and especially for the Almighty, should be most sedulously cultivated, and insisted upon. Any plain violation of such rules should be noticed and dwelt upon as a thing of great moment—an offence not to be overlooked or slighted. The child should understand, by the earnestness and serious displeasure of the parent, that such practices are not to be tolerated, but perseveringly rooted out, under a solemn sense of duty to God.

One of the greatest safeguards to the habits of children, and of course a good preservative of filial obedience, is a regular arrangement of time for different daily employments, fixed hours for retirement, and the habit of calling to account for the occupations of the day. As boys grow up, the importance of such regulations will probably be more plainly perceived. The most dangerous companions for a young man, are those who keep late hours. If a son knows that he is expected to be at home every evening, or frankly to acknowledge where he has spent it, and with whom;

if he knows that the severity of parental rebuke would inevitably follow the first violation of family rules, he would scarcely venture to cross a boundary beyond which all is danger. A father who finds his son becoming irregular in his habits, which is betrayed by an indifference to the pure enjoyments of a well regulated, intelligent and religious family, and a dislike for his studies or trade, may make up his mind at once to act with decision : for timely and judicious measures will save him much trouble, as well as afford a fair promise of success. The youth must at all events be separated from the companion or company who are beginning to mislead him, cost what it may.

And, first, the parent will need to ascertain who those companions are, and at what periods his son is most exposed to their society. Then let him occupy that time with some engrossing employment ; or, if necessary and possible, even send him away for a time, in order to break off the intimacy. Under such circumstances travelling, either in our own or in foreign countries, may prove highly useful ; especially if proper precautions are taken to secure the youth good companions and abundant interesting and useful employment. A long voyage with a good master and crew may sometimes effect much. The father must sustain his authority and control over his son, or he will expose himself and his family to a thousand evils. No trial, no self-denial, no exertion or sacrifice need be thought great, which will reclaim a youth in the early stage of disobedience and inclination to vice. With the lax discipline, and lax views of duty, fash-

ionable with many fathers of the present day, there is little probability of all such cases being treated with proper promptitude and energy ; but if the fond or imbecile parent knew how much greater suffering and labor he might thus avoid, he would be led to adopt the proper course out of regard to himself, as well as his son.

Parental authority, and, of course, parental example, should be strongly set in opposition to intemperance, every avenue to which should be carefully closed. Incalculable mischief has been done by the toleration of ardent spirits in the house and on the table, even by parents who did not drink it. This pernicious practice has been now almost abolished among the virtuous and respectable ; and unequivocal testimony should be borne against everything of the kind by the parent on every befitting occasion. Instead of reflecting, as many a youth has done, on seeing distilled liquors, "These were honored guests at my father's table," he should ever have reason to recollect that they were spurned from his home, and regarded with hatred and horror by the guardians of his youth. The subscribing of one's name as a member of a temperance society, will probably be a safeguard for a child, and weaken any temptation that may be thrown in his way. The entire rejection of all such drinks is the only safe principle to go upon : so that the parent should inculcate total abstinence, which means, as a little Sabbath-school boy once defined the expression—"never to take the first drop."

## CHAPTER XI.

### INTELLECTUAL INSTRUCTION.

Education begins early—Importance of domestic education, and our facilities for exercising it, especially in the middle and most sensible ranks of society—The father's instructions in conversation at table—The wonders of water—Other subjects.

MANY fathers never begin to talk much about what they call the “education” of their children, until they are old enough to be sent to a grammar or boarding school, or to college. The sons and daughters are allowed to grow up till such a period, almost without hearing the parent use the word. But let not parent or child suppose that education has not been going on all this time : no ; we might as well expect a stream to cease flowing because we have neglected to turn it into an useful channel. Education must go on : habits are formed, views are imbibed, feelings are daily strengthened by exercise, and if not right, all this will be wrong.

We see parents, waking, as it were, from the slumber of years, to talk and act on “education.” But what a childish figure they often make ! They are learning the alphabet of that language which they should long ago have spoken. They are apprenticing themselves to a business in middle life, which they should have daily practised from the infancy of their children. And of what use is it to bestir themselves

now ? Their children have been taught, by their example, great indifference towards learning, have imbibed many erroneous ideas about it and those who possess it, and have habits formed which their instructors will contest against at a great disadvantage. I would by no means discourage the father who has neglected the subject hitherto, from attending to it now. I would however warn him against the very common practice of making it an object of attention only for a particular period, or for a few intervals in his life. Let him, from this time forward, bestow reflection and exertion upon it every day. And this he should do for the benefit which the habit will confer both upon his child and upon himself.

It is greatly to be regretted, that while many parents overrate the advantages attending particular schools, or of merely going through a college, they underrate their own powers, and the opportunities which Providence has placed within their reach, for furnishing their children with much of that useful knowledge which literary institutions are designed to confer. A father should cultivate a respect for learning in his own breast, pay a proper regard to those who possess it, without abusing it, and daily inquire for and treasure up such useful truths as lie in his way. This he may do, greatly to his own gratification and improvement, whatever be his business or his situation in life ; and if he will add to this practice one very naturally arising out of it, viz. that of aiding and encouraging his children in pursuing the same, he will find by the results, that he lays the foundation for making them intelligent men

and women. It is not saying too much to declare that a farmer, or a mechanic, or a day laborer, in ever so retired a situation in our country, by faithfully pursuing this course, may give his children more real knowledge, even of a scientific and literary nature, than some of the children of the wealthy carry with them from the institutions to which they are sent.—Indeed, more unfavorable circumstances can hardly surround a child, than those which are found in many of the splendid mansions of our countrymen at the present day, even in regard merely to their influence on the mind; and when we superadd the tendency of fashionable life to render youth irreligious and vicious, we need not wonder that so many sink in society by the weight of their own ignorance and imbecility.

In any family where the principles inculcated in this book are regarded, where industry, economy, prudence, peace and love, are in regular exercise, especially if piety be the controlling influence, let the pecuniary circumstances, the origin, the connections, the disadvantages of the parents, be almost what they will, their children will be trained in a way which has led many before them to high respectability, intelligence and virtue.

Children should be sedulously trained to appreciate objects according to their real importance and value; and those who are most brought into personal contact with things as they are, have the best opportunity to acquire this important branch of knowledge. This is generally the case with the children of men in humble life; while those of the rich are very apt to

spend much time in manhood in correcting, by a course of painful experience, the erroneous opinions imbibed in early years.

Let the father address himself to the task of education, by discarding those rules, practices and methods, which are founded on certain erroneous principles common in the world. Whatever his own teachers may have believed, whatever he or his friends may have practised, he ought to determine that he will proceed on solid grounds ; he is imperiously called upon, by solemn duty ; and the great importance of those results to which his conduct will lead, to be judicious in deciding, and persevering in execution.

“Do you love to go to school?” is a great question which may be said to be habitually asked, by thousands of persons, when the child of a friend is introduced. It is innocent in itself, yet it has probably led to many a falsehood, and often brought upon those who have spoken the truth in reply, much undeserved censure. Not to love a bad school is not of course a crime ; and how few are good ! Many a school is of such a nature that no child who loves to improve in knowledge and goodness can like it. “Are you at the head of the class ?” “No Sir,” has often been given in reply to such a question with a sense of shame too great for every thing except the child’s love of truth. “Edward is a good boy ; he has the highest reward ; he is the best scholar in the school !” Oh, how untrue such conclusions generally are ! If measured by a fair intellectual standard, the highest in a class would often be found far behind some younger or more diffident child ; and as for moral

character, the whole system of emulation is much more calculated to injure than to improve it, or to give real improvement to the mind.

Such questions as those above, and innumerable other strokes (if I may so call them,) which are given during the slow work of education, are traceable to some of the common false principles, which time and general consent have rendered inveterate. Let the good father early consider their real nature and tendency, and not wait till bitter experience of their results shall convince him of what he may learn too late.

Miss Appleton, in her work on Early Education, has happily remarked as follows: "We do not desire to present words but things to children. The words are the vehicle to convey a truth or an image to the place of its destination, which is mind. A gentleman waiting for a friend, would be somewhat surprised and vexed to see his carriage drive up to the door empty. It might be a very grand equipage, but this would be a poor compensation for the vacancy within. The mind in like manner, is continually on the lookout for the arrival of a friend. If words are pushed before it, it never fails, at first, to look earnestly within and without for the sense, which they should carry along with them. If this companion be wanting, the mind turns away in vexation and disappointment; until, from being played the trick repeatedly, it becomes habituated to disappointment, and may then, perhaps, amuse itself with looking at the words: as an idle passenger gazes at an equipage, careless to whom it belongs, and of the merit of the owner. But, on the

other hand, the mind, rewarded for its watching and examination by the meeting with sense, where sense was expected to be found, joyfully receives and lodges the guest among ideas ; where, in so pleasant and friendly a company, new ideas are elicited, and improvement is certain to follow."

The great object of education should be the heart. If that be neglected, and certainly if it be corrupted, learning will still prove a powerful weapon, it is true : but its edge will be directed against what it should defend, and truth, virtue, character and parents, may become its victims. On the contrary, make the affections such as they should be, habits will spring from these, and knowledge, even if pursued for a time with little success, will then be sought, and will ever be applied to its proper uses.

*The Father's instructions in conversation at table.*

What can be easier, more agreeable, and instructive, than the daily practice of conversing in some such manner as the following? The father may thus convey some useful facts to his little circle, without making them feel that they are performing a task. Instruction may be thus communicated which might be esteemed an acquisition even at college ; and yet the amount of knowledge conveyed will not be more valuable than the advantage gained by thus expelling frivolous topics, or ill-natured remarks, from conversation, withdrawing the mind from the animal enjoyment of food, and training the children to make the time spent at table subservient to the cultivation of the social affections, and mutual

improvement. Let the parent duly estimate his own influence at table, and recollect that the heads of the family have all the table-talk at their direction.

But I cannot proceed to give my examples, without first reminding my readers that the table affords great advantages for the inculcation of gratitude to the Giver of good, and of those kind feelings and polite manners which should be carefully cultivated in the family.

Suppose the good father at his table. The blessing has been pronounced with reverence, and the tone and language of real thankfulness, and the family are partaking of another supply of necessary food. The father perhaps has made a favorable bargain, or experienced a disappointment, or is thinking of hopes or fears, difficulties or injuries, such as the world is full of. Let him form the habit of banishing such topics from conversation before his children, however much disposed he may feel to talk of them. Does he want a subject?—what useful fact, or creditable deed performed by another, or what public blessing have you heard of, since you last met your little family circle? Have you had no good thought which may turn your children's feelings in a pure and lofty channel?—But you need not always seek a subject so far from home.

The father takes up the glass of water beside him, holds it to the light, tastes it, looks at it an instant, and remarks—"How beautiful and clear that is! If this were the only water ever seen in the world, what would people say about it? They would think it very wonderful, and would go miles to see it. And

what would they say about it, John? (John and James and Mary may be questioned about its appearance and qualities.) Well, this water is just as beautiful and wonderful as if there were not clouds full and rivers full; and the goodness of God we ought to admire the more for sending us so much. What is water good for? Which of you can tell me, my dear children? (To drink, to wash, to swim in, to sail in, for fish to swim in, for horses to drink, for cows to drink, &c. &c. Children will often get much pleasure, and show much ingenuity and memory in tracing out such a subject.) Where does water come from when it rains? Where does it go to when it sinks into the ground—or when it runs down hill? What is water called when it runs? when much of it runs together? when it stands still in a large hollow? How do men get over water when it is in their way? (By bridges, boats, ships, steamboats, swimming, &c.; any of which may be enlarged on.) What lives in water? How can some animals live there while others will die if put into it? How are they formed to live in water?

Many such questions may be asked; indeed, when such an interesting subject has been introduced, the children will make many questions and answers themselves, mingling them with little anecdotes of their own experience. Each will probably be found to have some fact, or opinion, or conjecture, to advance, new to the others, and thus each will soon possess the views of all. Now let the father, if he pleases, propose something for them to inquire about in relation to the subject of conversation, to be re-

ported upon, to-day or to-morrow ; and a course will be begun which in time may lead to important results. The inquiry may be suited to circumstances, or several inquiries may be started, suited to different individuals. A little boy may like to know how much a particular animal or bird drinks, or how ; whether insects need water ; whence comes the dew, &c. An older may take interest in ascertaining, from some person acquainted with the ocean, the aspects and dangers of the sea, the expedients of human skill and science in navigation, or what regions or people he has seen on the other side of the globe. All these, and a thousand other questions, which may grow out of so fertile a subject, are rational topics of inquiry ; and the young should have the means for satisfying their curiosity thrown in their way, and enjoy the approbation of their parents, when they display interest, perseverance or intelligence, in relation to them.

“ Well, children, what was the question yesterday ? ” How many a cheerful look, how many an intelligent and gratifying reply might this simple question produce in the year, around that family table where it should be habitually asked ! Playmates, acquaintances, books, every source of information accessible to the children, would soon be under contribution, while their little minds would be daily proceeding, at least a little, in a path of improvement in which every mind must travel, and travel by the exertion of its own faculties, before it can become stocked with knowledge or acquire the power of using it. A mind not trained to observation, is like an eye closed against

the light. The first view it gets of the world is of course erroneous. A man unaccustomed to reasoning is like a person unused to the management of a keen instrument or a machine of unknown power. The first experiment with it is sure to be awkward, and is very likely to be injurious to himself or some other. Objects around us, perceptible to the senses, are proper subjects to employ the minds of the young. Ideas gained from them are just, distinct, and of evident utility, and therefore preferable to such as are less well defined and of doubtful application.

The same general course of remark and inquiry which may be applied to water, may be extended to almost every other familiar object; and on them all the parent can tell something useful, or direct the child to make observations of his own. Let not the father shrink from any detection of his own ignorance. He must readily admit that he has not learned every thing, and this he may attribute to neglect or the want of opportunity. His example will render his children in like manner frank and humble of their acquisitions, and incline them not to under-rate a thing merely because they are ignorant of it. The father may sometimes very properly say, "Now Mr. — knows more on this subject than I do, and I will ask him to inform me of it;" or, "I will look into a book, and read about this, and tell you at another time what I learn."

The uses and manufacture of salt, bread, linen, knives, dishes, glass, soap, and other familiar objects, having been considered on different occasions, with the materials and manner of building houses, fences,

carriages, &c. the father will find subjects multiplying on his hands, and the amount of information collected rapidly increasing ; while he will have the gratifying reflection, that his children are getting still more knowledge than they communicate, and are fixing important habits for life.

And it is important to bear in mind, that when any particular branch of instruction is pursued by one member of a family, it may be participated in by others with great facility. An intelligent person, by merely employing the time well at meals, may sometimes obtain the principles of a science from a friend who is studying it ; and who will be pleased with an opportunity to converse on the subject which chiefly occupies his mind. It should be a regular practice with the father, to draw out his guests and visitors in conversation on some useful topic with which they are best acquainted, for their own gratification and the benefit of the family. And how favorable is such a habit to the cultivation of friendly feelings, agreeable and useful recollections ! A child from school should be often questioned on the subjects he studies, in the presence of the other children, and they should be made to repeat the facts communicated.

One principle the parent should always keep in view : that of giving his children a just estimation of things according to their comparative value. And here I would suggest two considerations in relation to this subject. 1. We underrate things of which we are not well informed, while we are apt to overrate some of those with which we are partially acquainted. 2. We should therefore best guard against

false views by becoming acquainted with as many important subjects as possible.

I do not speak particularly of science, history, natural history, poetry, &c. ; for the father who has early commenced with the plan here recommended, will not need directions for extending it to the higher branches. I would however barely remark here, that Sabbath conversations may partake of the same scheme, though the topics must ever be appropriate to the day.

## CHAPTER XII.

### INTELLECTUAL INSTRUCTION—*continued.*

Conversation in general—Points to be guarded against in conversation—Books in a family library—Impure and frivolous works to be excluded—Fiction—Great objects of instruction—The father may write for the instruction of his children—Learning good prose and poetry by rote—Domestic instruction in geography, natural history, arts, common life, &c.—Children's compositions, journals, &c.

WITH regard to instruction, in a country where the means of communicating it are generally so easily obtained, the principal questions it might be thought should arise in relation to the sorts of knowledge to be conveyed to the mind at different ages, and the methods by which it should be accomplished. Every parent is interested in many other means of instruction beside schools and books; and it would be very improper to confine our view to these alone. What is to be said may be ranged under the following heads: Conversation, schools, books, newspapers, apparatus, associations.

*Conversation.* The use of conversation, as a means for the instruction of a child, may be begun very early, and should always be continued. How many thousands of ideas do we derive from the lips of others, even when we are not addressed. The mind of a child has different states—sometimes it receives and retains ideas, almost unconsciously, which at others might be

presented to it in vain. This is the fact with mature minds also to a great degree : for our thoughts are often fixed on something else, when conversation fails to attract our particular attention. Children often understand things which parents suppose to be far above their comprehension. They sometimes receive ideas which they have no words to express, and see through attempts made to disguise things from them. "I remember," said an individual, "my playing repeatedly on the floor in the presence of older persons, and understanding what they were speaking of, although at the same time I was chiefly engrossed with toys ; but whenever they spake low or rapidly to prevent me from comprehending, it at once attracted my curiosity, and lowered my opinion of them." No father is perfectly safe in saying things in the presence of a child above two years of age which he would not have it understand ; and it is well to observe the practice of reserving for another time everything of that nature. Young children will sometimes repeat the words they have heard, hours and even days afterwards, though they have seemed entirely engrossed with something else when they were spoken.

Conversation in the presence of children should be on useful topics, varied and cheerful, but never *about them*, unless with great caution. By proper attention, a parent may render conversation in the family one of the most delightful and effectual means of education. He can thus inculcate and exemplify such principles in this volume as he approves, and as many more good ones as he can discover.

We may here briefly mention some of the evils to

be avoided, and would urge parents assiduously to cultivate the best habits in their daily conversation, for the express benefit of their little ones. Let the father and mother impress themselves deeply with the importance of this means of education, and unite in watching over themselves and each other, with a constant and critical care. Let them agree,

1. Never to speak for the sake of talking.
2. Never to speak ill or disparagingly of another, when the duty to do so is not perfectly clear.
3. Establish such a habit, that when there is any excitement of feeling, the first impulse shall be to be silent.
4. To put the best construction on words and conduct.
5. To speak of what is useful.
6. Never to indulge in any thing coarse or vulgar even in a slight degree.
7. Never to border on irreverence to sacred things.
8. Never to argue except for the truth.
9. Strictly to observe the rules of courtesy.
10. To respect grammar and taste.

Conversation, being a means of instruction which is ever at our command, and borne with us wherever we go with our children, is worthy of great attention. It should be an early study with the father to familiarize himself with the language of childhood, which is indeed worthy of study on account of its curious and valuable traits, independently of the important uses to which it is to be made subservient. When acquired, a facility of conversing with children may be turned to account in many ways, which we must

leave, in a great measure, to the sagacity of the parent and the endless variety of circumstances continually presenting opportunities to resort to it. In another chapter will be found a sketch of table talk, and remarks on other branches of conversation, from which the reader may judge of the general views of the author. In another chapter still, some hints on schools may also be found.

The books and other publications to be introduced into a family, should be examined or inquired after with peculiar care. The idea that children should have various views on important subjects submitted to them, that they may make their own choice, is very dangerous to be acted on, if applied in such a manner as to leave them in doubt concerning the opinion of their parents, or to lead to the belief that they are regarded with indifference. Happy is the family which possesses a well selected library, appropriate to the improvement of parents and children, in constant use, and carefully kept in order. When the father is absent from home, he may ever take pleasure in the reflection, that some of his favorite authors are pursuing the course of education he has established in his family circle; and, while among his children, he finds ever at hand a supply of the materials and implements most convenient for use in prosecuting it himself. But let him admit no book into his collection which opposes his own avowed principles, or intimates a taste in its owner different from that which he inculcates. Every thing immoral and gross should be especially excluded: for how would it weaken a child's respect for his father, and diminish his confi-

dence in his sincerity, if searching through his library, to read, in one of the volumes treasured there, such sentiments as are found in parts of Shakespeare, Swift, Byron, Moore, and too many other authors, retained in elegant and popular editions, in defiance of decency and common sense? I do not doubt that many a parent has lost, unaccountably perhaps to himself, by some such accident, an influence over his child which he would not easily regain; while, on the contrary, to meet with nothing exceptionable would be eminently calculated to enhance a regard for the parent in the child. The child cannot appreciate the father's estimation of an injurious work because it is "complete:" his views of evil are decided and uncompromising—exactly such as we all should carry with us through life, and which nothing can impair without doing serious injury to the individual. If he could not obtain purified editions, if he could not procure any author whatever free from every trace of pollution, he should make up his library without it. Some might consider it incomplete: they should rather congratulate themselves on its more valuable quality of being free from a plague spot, which might infect those minds, to secure the purity of which is the principal object of the whole family system.

Frivolous works should also be excluded, and especially those fictitious productions which inculcate false and exaggerated views of the world and of man. The Arabian Nights, Tales of the Genii, and the old fashioned novels generally, are to youth, what Tom Thumb, Bluebeard, Peter Wilkins, Fairy Tales,

&c. are to children. They pervert the taste, excite the imagination, and misdirect the feelings, in a degree, and with numerous evil effects, which few duly appreciate as they deserve. On this subject many probably might speak from experience. I knew a person who lost years of useful reading through an unhappy devotion to these and similar works, and formed numerous unfounded ideas of himself and others, of life and manners, of duty and happiness, with which he had long to contest, and from which others as well as himself have since been sufferers. All works of such a tendency should be scouted. I am not prepared to condemn all fictions, but I can say that children naturally prefer truth, and, until their natural bent and just taste are affected by others, the greatest argument that you can raise against a book is that it is not true. If I could have my own wish, no child should ever be presented with one, at least until he is old enough to comprehend the motives of the author, and to understand that it is not the practical falsehood he might suppose, because it is an avowed fiction. If any works of imagination are harmless as well as useful, such are, those of Mrs. Hannah Moore, and of a few other similar authors, which present fictitious characters and scenes, founded on fact, expressly for useful ends. Such are Scott's novels among a different class of writing. Experience and close observation, however, lead us to admit, that the evils arising from an indulged fancy are so serious, that we must expect a finer taste, more solid progress in useful knowledge, and much better regulated feelings in a person trained up on plain

truth, than in one accustomed, even though but in a small degree, to the regions of fancy.

The simple truth is, that our children need to know themselves, their Maker, their fellow men, and the natural world, and, that for all these branches of knowledge ample provision is made, which is accessible to each of us, in this free and Christian country. The parent has only to perform his part aright, and no resort need be had to the complicated machinery which is so often called into education. The word of God must be our chief guide, as it will direct us in forming correct views from what we can see in ourselves, in others, and in creation. Good people must be our assistants in the task, by their example, advice, writings and cöoperation. And with such instruction as we may derive from our intercourse with society, and the history of past generations, and such success as we may hope for from the blessing of God, we need not feel that we are deficient in means, or deprived of encouragement. The objects of education are matters of fact; and we should beware how we bring falsehood into competition with truth before our children's eyes.

A father or mother may very cheaply cultivate literary taste in the family, as well as confer instruction, and communicate pleasure, by the occasional use of the pen. If the father, for example, has any facility in writing poetry, nothing can be more welcome to his little circle at home than the reading of a few lines, never so simple, on the birth day of the mother, or one of the children, or descriptive of some pretty object, or interesting event. The influence of

such a practice I have witnessed with great pleasure in the family of an excellent friend. Prose may be so managed as to answer the purpose nearly as well ; and the practice of keeping a little journal in travelling may be particularly recommended. Even if a few notes only are made, to be filled out in conversation at the fireside, several advantages may arise from it ; one of which is, that the children will perceive that the father's thoughts are often at home and on them even while he is far distant. Such a composition may be easily converted into a family lesson for instruction : notice may be given that at such a time in the evening the journal is to be produced ; and maps being opened, the father may proceed, and afterwards ask questions, and reply to queries in his turn, on geographical prints, or natural history, scenery, manners, &c. &c.

It is highly useful to store the memories of the young with good pieces of poetry and prose : passages from the Scriptures, and hymns, for religious objects ; and fine verses or rhetorical prose for the inculcation of important sentiments, or the cultivation of style. Even good maxims and pertinent proverbs are well worthy of the parent's attention. No one can foresee how many forcible practical lessons may be derived from such a stock in future life, or what important actions may be the result. The parent should also occasionally repeat passages from memory, for instruction, interest and amusement, and sometimes quote wise sayings in appropriate cases, that the children may learn how to use the materials and weapons they are furnished with.

I would recommend it to every father, on the opening of the Spring, to endeavor to afford his children the natural enjoyments appropriate to the season, according to their ages and sexes. If these enjoyments can be agreeably associated with useful labor, it would be gaining a double point. If the father has a garden, he should early mark off a bed or a corner for each of the children, direct them how to turn up the ground, giving reasons for it, and enlarging, if he can, on the principles of agriculture, its useful results, our dependence upon the products, and its beneficial influence on health, the mind and the feelings. The care of the soil should be represented also as an evil compared with the higher employments for which man was destined in a state of original innocence, although a blessing when connected with our present condition; and its tendency to invigorate the body and mind, to give pleasure, respectability and wealth, should be shown. The children should be supplied with seeds, encouraged to plant and water them, and to reflect as well as to read and converse on subjects connected with agriculture.

Children may be taught much geography at home, at an early age and with great facility, by having maps hung where they can see and study them daily, especially, if frequent recurrence be had to them by the parents, to point out the scenes of interesting events. I would begin to teach geography by making a child tell what is on the different sides of the garden, yard, or even room, and enumerating the objects it contained, their forms, size, uses, origin, &c. Geography cannot well be separated from every thing

else, and climate, soil, animals, vegetables, minerals, &c., aid in fixing each other in the memory. Then the child may be made to describe a neighbor's garden, or field, and to compare the two, with the animals, trees, flowers, &c. which they contain. After this his views may be extended farther ; and at the close of a walk he may be asked what he has observed in relation to fields, gardens, farms, &c. How much is a tree worth which bears such or so many apples ? Why are sheep so carefully tended ? What are their enemies ? &c. A child by walking up and down a hill, will learn the meaning of the words, "acclivity," "mountain," &c., and he should be made to observe a brook, pond, &c. to get distinct ideas of what is signified by geographical terms which are usually taught by rote. If a youth has once got an intelligent idea of a farm, its soil, productions, inhabitants, stock, tillage, &c., he will be well prepared to extend his views by degrees over the world. If to such knowledge of a small tract of country be added that of things connected with the state of society, he will have begun at the right place his study of nations. And children have a strong as well as a most reasonable curiosity to learn the causes of the moral phenomena they daily witness. A few words will satisfactorily explain to them the uses of roads, carriages, numerous implements, animals, &c. And why is it not of importance to let them know the reasons why we enjoy so much security at night, and why there is any thing to guard against ; by what power we hold our property ; how laws operate unseen but effectually in some familiar cases ; how a

seal on a letter becomes a security ; how individuals have risen to great influence in society ; and why others are less esteemed.

On any of these subjects short remarks or essays may be written with great advantage. The power of writing well is very valuable, and cannot be obtained without practice. It is a good habit to require the children to write a little daily on domestic or other subjects.

A boy while receiving his classical education is left too much to form his own opinions of the usefulness, the objects, the practical applicability of what he studies. It is desirable that he should be informed in general terms at least on this point, that he may be encouraged to exert himself, and still more that he may not imbibe the injurious idea that what is useless may be worth acquiring for show, or for some purpose not understood by his parents, who put him at the task, or by his teachers, and therefore of questionable value.

I would say to parents who have not the intention or the opportunity to give their children an acquaintance with the classical studies, that many of the advantages which they can confer on such as pursue them faithfully may be secured by means within their own reach. Our own language, if studied as carefully as Latin or Greek, may be made perhaps even more serviceable in showing the philosophy of human speech ; all the historical facts, and many of the poetic beauties, obtained from ancient books, may be got from translations ; a far more precise and practical knowledge of the principles of republican government

than mere books can ever give, may be derived from verbal instruction on the powers of our own officers, the manner of performing elections, transacting public business, the uprightness and intelligence which ought to prevail among a people and their magistrates, with a little pains to show such living examples as town meetings, the conversation and actions of men, frequently offer, even to the humblest persons in society.

Whether one travels in his own country or in foreign lands, one of the greatest safeguards of time and character is to go provided with a plan. It is desirable that a father, before setting out, should fix on specific objects of inquiry or attention for the employment of his leisure, in each place he expects to visit, and provide a memorandum book in which to note down, however briefly, important facts and suggestions.

A father who sends off his son for a distant city, or country, without indicating objects of attention to him on his way or after his arrival, may expect him, at best, to derive but a small portion of the benefit from his journey which he might derive ; but he who provides him with a written list of questions to answer, accompanied with such notes as may prove instructive, has put some means of self-instruction in his hands, and guarded him against many temptations. This principle may be early introduced, by proper attention to suggestions made in another chapter on early practical instructions in geography, the arts, &c. and practice will render such a system familiar.

A child should not be allowed to imbibe false ideas of the proper ends of the learning or knowledge he may acquire. We run great risks, in many schools

and colleges, of becoming conceited with literary honors, or of mortification and disgust if we do not obtain them. We are too much exposed, also, to form selfish views, to select selfish objects of pursuit, and to render life a mere race-course or battle ground, on which we see nothing desirable but our own exaltation. To counteract this propensity, which may be discovered in every breast, the principles of the Gospel must be constantly brought in. Every acquisition recommended to a child, should be represented like a new talent, as valuable on account of the benefits which result from its use. The good of those around, the real advantage of society, the happiness of men, and the honor of God, should be perpetually held out as the objects to be aimed at in life ; and the more clearly a child can be made to perceive the beneficial tendency of his exertions, the more likely will the parent be to meet success in giving him a lofty aim.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SOCIETY, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION.

Advantages offered by the state of society in our own country—Public celebrations—Training days—Exhibitions of children—Celebrations appropriate to an intelligent, virtuous and Christian people—Duty of fathers in fostering literary societies—Safeguards against intemperance and crime—The neighborhood—How to be regarded—Habits of loving neighbors—Petty jealousies—Social intercourse—Influence of Sabbath Schools, religious and charitable associations on families.

EVERY good father, as one of the preparatory steps to forming a plan of education, should take an intelligent and enlarged view of society. His children must be in some manner connected with it: they cannot live independently of it. At every period of their lives they must more or less sympathize with others, as well as derive more or less knowledge from them. There are so many ways of learning and teaching, that we often receive and communicate ideas without observing it; and we are so much affected by those around us, that any of us might have been materially different from what we are, in mind, heart or habits, if we had been accustomed to a different society.

I wish the father to become early and permanently impressed with the fact, that we enjoy most important advantages in this country for the training of chil-

dren. There are no fixed artificial classes or ranks, which cause so much estrangement among fellow citizens in many other countries; and there are no restrictions to prevent the parent from pursuing any system he pleases in training his children. All professions and trades also are open and free; and knowledge is easily accessible by persons of every class. But however much might be said of the peculiar advantages we enjoy, it is probable that but few fathers would be able fully to realize their own comparative advantages, for want of acquaintance with the disadvantages of other lands. But let us consider how far we may turn to account the means offered by our numerous religious, moral, and literary societies.

Children have such lively sympathies, that they hardly ever fail to feel strongly on subjects which are the common topics of conversation, especially when there is much attendant visible movement or exhibition. Military displays are no doubt injurious to them, by producing an excitement without any defined object, and leaving the mind with nothing satisfactory, instructive or useful, to fix upon. The impressions thus made upon the feelings of the young are, besides, not on the whole agreeable. Let any father recall the species of intoxication with which he was sometimes seized on a training day, and the state of exhaustion and disaffection in which he has sometimes found himself after it has passed. But when to mere frivolity are added the scenes of irregularity and vice, which are too often presented to the view of children, it must be allowed that periods of military display are not desirable occasions for them.

Public exhibitions and days of national festivity are to be approved of: but the objects should be appropriate, and kept distinctly in view, while the mode and means should be becoming a Christian public. Most happily we have abundant means to render them interesting and improving to the public. It is desirable that they should offer an opportunity to every class in society to act some part, or to derive some benefit from what may be done. Wherever we can make children participators in a proper manner, the opportunity should not be lost. There is no more delightful sight than a collection of well-behaved children in a public assembly, or moving in procession. To parents the sight of one such display may afford interest enough for a whole day; and as the children will be sure to engage in it with great pleasure, the chief part of society is thus at once provided for. There should always be some address or exercises, calculated to present the value or importance of some great principle; and it will not be long, it is to be hoped, ere we shall do justice to the fine arts, and add the attractions and instructions of painting, sculpture, music and poetry, to our civic public occasions.

The annual exhibitions of Infant and Sabbath schools, if properly conducted, will afford a source of rational entertainment to the young. Parents should not lose the opportunity which such occasions will present, of placing in merited contrast these pure, rational and beneficial public amusements with some of those whose character and tendency are of the opposite nature. Literary associations, appropriate to the state of things around, may and must

be patronized by the intelligent parent, if he would expect to secure to his children all the advantages which society is able to confer upon them. Library companies, reading-rooms, (not mere news rooms,) public cabinets of minerals, plants, shells, &c.; Lyceums, athenæums, &c., should exist in every neighborhood; otherwise the tavern, oyster cellar, confectioner's shop, refectory, porter house, or something worse, will tempt and receive at least the young around us, and mark plague-spots upon one youth after another, whose infection will spread far and wide. It will be no consolation to us that the leaven has operated for a time imperceptibly. We know the nature of such moral *malaria*, that it rises like an invisible flood, and may invade any dwelling; and it is our duty to prevent its very existence. Probably thousands of youths might have been saved from ruin, by the mere fact of having been furnished with a respectable place of resort for their leisure time. Every clerk and apprentice, as well as every other person in the neighborhood, should have access to a public room, supplied with books, maps, pictures, &c. and have a right to a seat in it during good behaviour, and compliance with the rules.

Respectable company, useful occupation, and comfortable accommodations, in such places, with a sense that his conduct would be observed, could not fail to impose useful restraints upon him, and to afford him great facilities for intellectual improvement.

Public lectures on popular topics are also very useful to society, and should be furnished by associa-

tions of parents. In many places they are given gratuitously.

The necessary expenses of such operations as these are very small. Many lyceums in our country furnish a course of lectures each winter at the expense of from half a dollar to two or three dollars to the members.

Such means as these must be used to give full success to moral societies, especially to temperance associations. The principle is the same as that on which a good man would act who has rescued a friend from intemperance. He takes care to furnish him with respectable associates, and interesting and useful occupation for his leisure ; and this is exactly the object of library companies, public lectures, lyceums, &c. in a more general application. If public authorities would establish such means by law, they would soon save a great deal of the cost of courts, prisons, poor houses, hospitals, &c. But legislators, as well as fathers and citizens at large, have formed habits of being *pound foolish*, and it is very difficult to make them despise *penny wisdom*.

*Neighborhood.* A father may avail himself of many opportunities offered by a neighborhood, in the education of his children. He ought however to become well informed of the habits as well as principles of those with whose children his own may associate, before he too far encourages their intimacy. Nothing but what is very decidedly bad, or in total opposition to his own views on important subjects, ought to be allowed to prevent intercourse. We must expect to find imperfections as well as to exhibit them ;

and if they fall under the observation of our children, we may use them as occasions for warning. In general the young should be brought up with the most friendly feelings towards neighbors, and discouraged, by example and precept, in every disposition to dislike, disparage, envy or despise them.

Here will often be work enough for an attentive parent. But never let him forget to begin with training the feelings in his own breast. If they are kindly and affectionate, lenient, forgiving and benevolent, towards those who dwell in his neighborhood, he may calculate with confidence that his children will be young philanthropists. Then let not an unnecessary word of blame fall from your lips against those around you. They must be frequently subjects of conversation. Human minds, unfortunately, are generally ill stored with more important or more interesting topics of meditation than what are presented to their eyes ; and these employ a great part of our thoughts and conversation. It is of great consequence, of far greater than many fathers will be easily led to suppose, that children should be brought to respect and love their neighbors, so far as they may fairly be regarded as objects of respect and love.

The father is deeply interested in exercising such feelings towards those around him, on his children's account as well as his own. Our happiness and our moral improvement greatly depend on the nature of our prevailing dispositions ; and what can be more agreeable and useful to the heart, than to cultivate high and pure affections towards those for whom we must of necessity feel something or other every day

and many times in a day? How different must the account stand at the end of the year, of the man who perpetually blames his neighbor for the most trifling thing he does, and his who habitually in looking upon him, loves him.

Now, the neighborhood, as furnishing opportunities for training the affections of our children, and fixing their ideas of characters, is a far superior practical school to that which is offered by any course of biographical reading with which we can furnish them. Yet it is a lamentable fact, that some parents, who could comment with admiration on the qualities of some of the fabricated heroes and heroines of fiction, of a winter evening, will spend no little part of the winter itself, and perhaps of the whole year, in suspecting the intentions, perverting the motives, words or actions of living persons around, whose lives and characters might often furnish most interesting and improving lessons for their children. Let the good parent then, on looking upon the neighborhood, adopt the principle of magnifying virtues, and excusing, palliating, or at least forgiving, faults.

A boy once lived some months in a family, in a country village, where he never heard the master or mistress indulge in any ill-natured remarks about any of the neighbors. When therefore he met them, (as he afterwards remarked), he had no prejudices to prevent him from enjoying all the kindness they offered, or to make him anticipate ill treatment or evil intentions; and he ever after bore a gratifying recollection of them.

To give the other side of the picture, let the father

recall, if he can, what it is to be feared most of us will find little difficulty in recollecting, a family, in which it is the practice to satirize or asperse other people. The ill effects of this habit there has been reason on many occasions to deplore. I would not judge too hardly of those who have indulged this propensity in their early life, for it is doubtless owing to the too influential example of older persons engaged in their education. How little does an individual sometimes imagine, that extensive evil may be produced by indulging in the practice of making ill-natured remarks! Yet how easily may a parent, or a friend, or a nurse, under particular circumstances, so speak and so act, in the presence of children, as to incline them to be censorious, jealous, envious or suspicious of their neighbors through life! They will insensibly copy the manner of looking round with a significant smile, a toss of the head, or a curl of the lip, as a visiter leaves the room, or as a kind hearted neighbor says or does some friendly thing in a particular manner. They will perhaps get the same proverbs or depreciating comparisons on their tongues, or a supply of perverted motives, ready for use on all occasions. Connected with this habit we often find personal vanity, or family pride, which are among the weakest passions we can ever show. When this union exists, you may bid adieu to good neighborhood, and the blessings you ought to derive from it, as well as confer upon it.

In connection with the recommendation above given of cultivating kindly feelings towards neighbors, it may be very proper to point the parent at the habit

of praising and complimenting each other, so dangerous in a family. I will not enlarge upon its nature or tendency, but only remark, that it is possible for the members of such a family to suffer for life in consequence of it.

In *social intercourse*, that spirit should reign which would make the most perfect harmony with your family system;—the spirit of true love, or, as it is translated, Charity, which thinketh no evil—the spirit of a sound mind.

That we think no evil, should be shown in our comments on our friends after parting from them. Others should not hear us make remarks indicative of a suspicious or a perverting spirit. On the contrary, though an equivocal remark may have fallen from one of them, or a slighting action or look have been observed in another, we should spontaneously attribute it to inattention, oversight, thoughtlessness or misapprehension; at any rate, we should use such exculpatory or forgiving remarks as these:—“My friend has a hasty temper, such as mine has been, or might have been; he is liable to trials, or may be, from which we are thus far exempt. How soon I may be so tried I know not; but I should apprehend my inability to bear them with equanimity. His temper is ardent; I know his warmth and impetuosity—perhaps he is now asking forgiveness of Him who has power and will to pardon.”

As to the spirit of a sound mind, how few of us have it! Some of us are apt to think we possess it. In youth, when we are learning, but have not pursued the acquisition of knowledge so long as to ascertain

that it is unlimited, we are apt to think that an immense distance is passed when we have stepped from one set of ideas to another. If we compare ourselves with others who know less, especially on our favorite subjects, we are tempted to entertain the idea that we are the people, and that knowledge will die with us. But every year, if not every day, shows us that our conclusions are erroneous, our anticipations vain, our valued acquisitions of little or no use, and our fancied solid foundations, changeable and uncertain. What we believe now we once disbelieved or decried ; what we may hereafter enjoy, we now perhaps dislike. We have often the disgust, in the morning, to find the world, ourselves and our condition, appearing very different from what they did in the evening, and the mortification to reflect at every disappointment that it is according to the course of human affairs. What is our life, but a series of mistakes ?

The father should recollect, that society will often be performing its part on his children while he is otherwise employed ; and so far as he is able he should endeavor to give its influence such a bias as may prove useful to them. Children are necessarily left much of their time in the company of other persons, and must be influenced by their conversation. It is very desirable that his own character should be respected by all ; for the children will be very likely to discover how he is esteemed by others. A sensible and virtuous man needs not only to be benevolent, but to be courteous. Bad manners often bring ridicule even upon those whose excellences are acknowledged, and excite a degree of contempt which it is not always

easy to conceal. Let the father, then, for his children's sake, be particularly careful to command the sincere respect and good will of those with whom they are to mingle, and ever treat them with such manners as shall be agreeable.

Great influence will be exerted upon a child, by keeping up an intimate connection between the family and Sabbath schools, and Bible classes ; and by having some individual an active member of the Bible society, Tract, Missionary, and other societies, which now perform so much of the good done by our countrymen at home and abroad. The feelings which such systematic labors produce, the knowledge of important facts which they diffuse, the maturity of mind, elevation and expansion of heart and systematic habits which they cultivate, form a rich treasure which should be carefully divided among our children. And this may and will be done, to a great extent, and almost of course, if we and our families are connected with those associations. How many materials will thus be furnished, in the course of the year, to the stock which is to compose the topics of fire-side and table talk !

After what has been said in other chapters, concerning the selection and use of such materials, it will be perhaps unnecessary here to occupy more time with this important subject : but the intelligent parent will find, the more he turns his attention to the advantages thus offered by society in the education of his children, that every day and every hour will disclose some way of availing himself of them.

In the improvement of the state of society, too, he

will find he has a most deep and immediate interest ; and while such men as Douglas and Dick, on the other side of the Atlantic, are writing on the means by which its condition and influences may be purified and exalted, it is to be hoped that American fathers, on whom devolves the task of practically effecting the desired object, may realize the superior advantages they possess, and will engage in the undertaking on the best principles, and without delay, and proceed in it without discouragement.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### MUSIC, POLITENESS, PUNCTUALITY, &c.

The cultivation of music in the family—Vocal music—Its importance as a means of discipline and instruction, as well as a source of enjoyment—Nature prompts to cultivation of vocal music—Almost every child capable of learning to sing—The musical machinery of the throat—Singing schools useful, and worthy of patronage—Musical instruments for children—False views of politeness—Good manners—Practical training—Systematic beneficence—Example—Instances to illustrate.

VOCAL MUSIC should be cultivated in every family as one of the prominent objects; and this on account of its value in several points of view. The mere enjoyment to be derived from the practice, may be regarded as of secondary importance when compared with its use to the parent as a means of instruction and discipline. Those who have not reflected as much on the subject as it deserves, may not have observed in how many ways it may be rendered subservient to these ends.

1. Vocal music is well calculated to subdue and banish those petty passions and feelings of disaffection which so often mar the family circle. If children begin to feel fretful, or if any member of the household has brought to the fireside any jarring influence;

or if the father himself feels something of the agitations or vexations of business from the world in which he has mingled, let an appropriate air or hymn or two be early sung. How sweetly, how spontaneously do hearts melt into harmony when the voices begin to accord ! If there be any parent who has never made the experiment, let him try it at the first opportunity. If he does not find vocal music an influential and a useful friend in his little kingdom, I can hardly recommend it to any common pacificator.

2. Singing greatly aids instruction. In exerting discipline, as above mentioned, it of course teaches the heart ; and when frequently practised, the education the affections receive is of great importance. But to intellectual instruction also it affords material aid. When a child has learnt a song relating to any subject, how deeply and vividly are impressed upon his memory the subjects to which it relates ! And it is an important advantage that the impression is agreeable, being associated with sweet sounds and harmony, and frequently with the recollection of the friends or scenes present when it was learnt or repeated. It would therefore be worth the trouble to teach even common things with the aid of songs. Barbarians have usually found poetry and music the wings of historical knowledge, and have sometimes applied them to other subjects. In civilized countries, where books perpetuate facts, they are still much employed to reach those who read little, and to carry thoughts and feelings farther than they would otherwise go. We must call in every faculty and every proper inven-

tion, to promote education ; and this powerful principle should form a prominent feature in our plan.

By means of vocal music, we may also lay the foundation for much benefit, as well as much enjoyment, in later life. The songs learnt in childhood recur to the mind thousands of times in subsequent years, and are always preferred on account of the recollections they awaken. Perhaps there are no other means by which the same effects may be so easily and so certainly produced. When impressions have been thus made, the child is engaged to work, in his parents' stead, for his own improvement, through life. Memory, when wakened by harmony, like that you have cultivated at home, will revive in the mind your words as well as tones, and bring up the pure affections, the peace and enjoyment, the principles and examples which now surround your children at the fireside, perhaps long after and far away, whatever changes may have befallen you or your home. I could mention the feelings expressed by an American in Holland, on hearing a song sung on a journey, and a hymn in a church, such as he had learnt at home ; but how well known are the fondness of the Swiss and Scotch for their own music, and the vivid impressions it revives of their country, that is, of their homes and friends, when heard in a foreign land ! There are happily many little songs for children now current in our infant schools, set to lively airs, and these are generally well worth teaching, as they relate to some useful branch of knowledge or art, or inculcate some good sentiment. We are still unhappily very deficient in songs for youth and manhood, becoming a Christian, a virtuous and

an intelligent people ; and as for national airs, there are few, if any, in existence in the United States. These it is to be hoped we may hereafter produce—certainly one good one would be worth scores of such as we usually import, and foolishly render fashionable.

The child should be carefully guarded against corrupting and even against foolish songs. Many of those which will fall in their way are in miserable taste, most are insipid, and some directly injurious and even immoral. In respect to this subject the parent is liable to great difficulties, and may need to practice much watchfulness and independence. One of the best precautions is to store his children's minds early with as many good songs and hymns, anthems, &c. as possible, that their good and cultivated taste may reject the bad and the frivolous. We should not endure the connection of music or poetry with any thing coarse or vulgar, but insist that they be applied only to what they were designed for: viz. the beautiful in nature, the useful in art, the pure in character, the unblemished, the good, and the truly excellent in every thing.

Music is one of the first things for which a child expresses a fondness. The tones of the human voice, when affected by tender parental feelings, are by nature melted into melody, as if expressly to gratify this early taste, and convey consolation and peace to the babe. It is therefore very good advice to the mother, who is called to some distance from her little child by domestic duties, occasionally to speak to it in an endearing tone. When children begin to like "jumping," that is, motion with the aid of their parent's hands, it will be often found that they move their

limbs in time with singing. Even when creeping on the floor, I have seen a child of ten months stop on hearing music, laugh for joy, and move his body backwards and forwards in time with the instrument or the voice. It is a very common, and a very injurious error, to suppose that music is natural but to certain persons. This has denied the benefit of it to many, for life. Whether all children might not be taught to sing correctly and to enjoy music, is still doubted. It is certain from many experiments, that the exceptions are at most very rare. In an orphan Asylum in Germany, not more than one or two were found among two hundred; and similar evidence is found in our infant schools and juvenile concerts in the United States. Let the parent then take it for granted that his child is capable of being taught to sing, and proceed in training it daily, in the full confidence of success.

No one can consider the wonderful, ingenious and delicate arrangements made in the human throat for the production of musical sounds, without thinking it inexcusable to neglect their use. An enlargement of the throat, or a cavity of two or three inches in dimensions between the top of it and the root of the tongue, is lined with membranes, so stretched that the air passing through them makes a sound as through the reed of a clarionet. By gently grasping the upper part of the throat, and speaking a word or sounding a single note, the vibration is felt. This would be a curious instrument, even if it admitted of no variation of sound: but it is furnished with five cartilages, which contract and expand the cavity at pleasure in different ways, so

as to give different vibrations, and of course different tones. In this small space, then, in the throat of every human being, is an instrument with a compass of from two to three octaves, which has the command of every semitone and subdivision of note, swell, trill, &c. and not necessarily exposed to the imperfections of artificial instruments, but so sweet, rich and clear, when well used, as to be the highest standard of comparison in these points for the flute, clarionet, piano, organ, &c. Let the wonderful qualities of this instrument but be considered, let it be observed how dexterously even the most ignorant of music manage it in conversation, and how easily a little child is able to use it, though it is entirely concealed from sight; and then let us but consider that one great object of its construction was that it should be employed in sounding the praises of its Creator, and in sending pure feelings and holy thrills to every heart within hearing, and we cannot feel indifferent to the cultivation of vocal music in our families.

A single sweet and correct singer, by a little daily practice, is often able to train many others in this exalting and delightful art. Singing schools, however, are generally very useful in cultivating the taste and the powers; and these should be carefully countenanced and encouraged, when judiciously conducted, as a harmless and useful public amusement. Probably those only who have attended them in youth can fully appreciate the gratification and benefit they may confer. How many of those evil tendencies are avoided, which are found in assemblies of the young, collected for the display of dress, manners or beauty,

and where there is a want of every rational object? It is probable that much good has been done by the public, as well as the private cultivation of singing, which has not been traced to its source. Instances might be mentioned, in which it has seemed to be the only bond of restraint to persons prone to vice or frivolity, while it has coöperated with the good parent in his exertions to shut out evil influences from the society around his little flock.

Perhaps every child, at some period or other, has a desire to use some musical instrument. In this he should be encouraged, and should be furnished with some one which he may use. It should be one from which he can draw notes, and correct ones too; and then perhaps the plainer and cheaper it is the better; they will enjoy a jews-harp, or Æolian harp, very much. The child should be permitted to make his own experiments for a time, and receive aid only when he desires it, as with a string stretched between the window sashes, &c. He cannot at first understand the use of the usual process of initiatory instruction, and will be more in danger of total discouragement if required to make dull monotony, or discords, when he is seeking for melody.

*Good Manners*, so much and so lamentably neglected at the present day, the father should cultivate with double diligence, because the general neglect of them will most counteract his exertions whenever his children mingle with society. Let his house be a place where good manners, in the highest sense of the term, shall ever prevail. Let him not lay too much stress on particular forms or address. Manners;

founded on the principles of the Gospel,—love to man mingled with the love of God, and an intelligent mind—will be the best, the only truly good manners he can establish. Ah, how pitifully do those parents mistake themselves, as well as their children and the world, who expect to have manners formed at dancing schools ! It is their own fault if their children's manners are not well formed ; and they betray their own superficial views of the subject, by so greatly overrating its mere externals.

Manners are properly the type of character : they profess to be the glass through which the heart and mind, the feelings and thoughts, are seen. As such they should ever be considered ; and whoever trains a child to consider them in any other light, runs the risk of training him to deception. As the Christian character is the most lovely and sublime, the manners of a Christian should be the best ; and this may be inculcated in the following manner.

“ John and Caroline, did you see Henry come into the room just now ? ” “ Yes sir. ” “ Did he come in properly ? ” “ No sir. He came in speaking loud, and went up to the fire to warm his hands, standing before mother. ” “ Why should he not do so ? ” “ Because you and mother have told us to treat older people with respect. ” “ What is it to treat with respect ? ” “ To behave like a good child—To mind them and please them. ”

“ Come here, my children, and I will tell you something about good manners, or treating other people with kindness and respect. You should always treat people so, because you are told, and because it is

right. Every body should do so, whether they are told to or not. Henry came into the room as if he did not care for any body but himself. Is he so good or so wise that nobody else is worth thinking of?" "No sir—he is not wise at all, or but very little." "A little boy, children, cannot know as much as a grown person, he has had so little time to learn; and if he says he thinks he knows more, he seems the more foolish for that. Now if Henry had thought that other people were wiser than he, would he have wished to interrupt them in speaking by making a noise?" "No sir." "Well, besides this, do you think Henry acted as if he loved himself or other people best?" "Himself." "Why would you think so?" "Because he went up to the fire, and stood where he could warm himself best, without caring whether he kept the heat from others or not." "That is wrong, and every thing like it is wrong, because we must not love ourselves best. Whom should we love best?" "God." "What does the Bible say about it?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," &c. "How much are we to love other people?" "And thy neighbor as thyself." "Now, children, if a boy or girl loves other people as well as himself, will he show it in what he does?" "Yes sir." "Henry, go out of the room, and come in again as a boy should do, if he loved us all as well as himself. John, go and see if you can do it any better. Caroline, you may go out and come in like a good little girl."

"Now, my children, don't forget to enter a room in this manner. Come in politely, and come in cheerfully. Those who love God often think of him—

and it makes them smile to think how good he is. Some good people think of him a hundred times a day, and more ; and some think of him almost the whole time. This gives them a cheerful countenance. And whenever they meet the friends whom God has given them they feel happy. Good people then should be cheerful as well as polite. But some people think that politeness is nothing but making bows or courtesies, laughing, talking gaily, or paying compliments—that is, saying things which are not true, or which are foolish, to make others think themselves better, or wiser, or handsomer than they are. All this is wrong ; and so it is to think that a person who has not good manners may get them by going to a dancing school. I have known persons who could dance, bow, talk, &c. who had no true politeness at all. They had not that love to God or for other people from which it grows. Those who send children to dancing schools to learn good manners, are like a gardener who would expect a flower to live without a root. Paying compliments and making bows are not so much like good manners as a parrot's jabbering is like speech. They are a mere trial without succeeding. False manners may look like good ones at first, but they are counterfeits, and meant only to deceive. I will ask you questions about manners another time. Don't forget what I have said to you."

On another occasion, the father may teach his child to hand or take a thing politely, at table or elsewhere ; to forbear to interrupt or ridicule another, even one younger ; to treat a servant with proper kindness and regard ; to hand a chair to a friend or stran-

ger ; to entertain a visitor by showing objects of interest, engaging in sensible or religious conversation, singing with readiness when requested, &c. &c. The children may be occasionally made to criticise each other's manners, and to express opinions on propriety in particular cases, though not with any asperity or desire to procure blame. Mutual improvement must be the great object held up to them in all their criticisms on each other ; and it will be well often to comment on the happiness of a family where every thing is conducted on the principles of the Gospel. In such ways, as in many others, the children may be made powerful assistants to the parents in all departments of family instruction and discipline.

Examples of hospitality may be read from the Scriptures with great interest ; as the few first verses of Genesis, xviii. and xix. ; and such passages as indicate the politeness and refinement of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles. Language being one important branch of manners, will go far to convey just ideas on this subject ; and the mildness, affection and sweetness of St. John, as well as the warmth of Paul and Peter, cannot be listened to by children without their imbibing very correct ideas of the feelings which ought to regulate their intercourse with others. Above all, the example of the Saviour should be particularly dwelt upon.

All violent passions should be avoided, and especially personal conflicts between children, partly because they ruin good manners,

*Systematic beneficence* is a branch of education not to be neglected. As the studies of the philosopher

become in a degree uninteresting and useless without the experiments of the laboratory, so the most important lessons in sentiment and manners lose much of their attraction and use unless put into practice. The benevolence of the Gospel is præeminently active ; but the cold approbation of duty, and the habit of admitting obligation without complying with it, is pointedly reprovèd as opposed to the spirit of obedience. The question always should be—which *did* the will of his father ; not who first understood or promised to perform it. The parents, being active members of some beneficent society, and practising charity to the poor, and kindness to all, as they have opportunity, will early initiate their little ones into the ground-works of the science, (if I may so express it,) by their example and conversation. How delightful is every step in such a process ! How gratifying to train our children not only to will, but also to do, according to the good pleasure of their Heavenly Father !

A child should early learn that its parents' minds are often employed in studying what will tend to promote the good of the poor, the ignorant and the vicious ; and that the task of preparation to go abroad, is performed for some object consistent with the solemn duties enjoined upon him in instruction. A mother should be particularly regardful of the manner in which her children will be struck with her motives in her visits abroad, as they see all the details of preparation, and naturally regard them as important. If a parent would see himself in a faithful mirror, let him listen to the playful imitations of life and manners sometimes given by his little child—he will find

his actions and words repeated, and those motives professed, which perhaps he has scarcely acknowledged even to himself. A simple inquiry made aloud, on going out, may give an useful impression : “ what good shall I try to do ? ” or “ let me think—I am going to leave my dear children ; now what is it for ? It is to see Mr. or Mrs. —, one of the good and wise friends God has given me.” And other questions and remarks of a similar nature may well be occasionally expressed aloud on returning, to show that the duty and pleasure of doing good have an active influence on your life.

Another useful influence to be exerted by such a plan, is, to lead children to an acquaintance with the modes of doing good, the plans and operations of useful associations, the details of institutions, and the circumstances of people in society.

A little girl of three and a half, whose father taught a class of young children on the Sabbath, found a source of much occupation and pleasure in hearing the little anecdotes he brought home, as well as in being consulted on plans for their instruction and benefit, in visiting them at school, and in going through their exercises. She often received a lesson with peculiar interest because it had been, or was to be tried with the children ; and she sometimes would tell on which side of the door she would have her seat when she should be old enough to teach the poor, where she would range her pupils, and place her apparatus, and what she would reply or direct, under given circumstances, in cases of instruction or discipline. As a peculiar privilege she was once

informed that she might give a warm garment to one of those poor children in the winter; and probably enjoyed as much in anticipation as if it had been a promised toy or a "pretty frock." The object of her benevolence was one day brought before her, that she might realize that tattered clothes, worn out shoes, and sorrowful looks, were more than fancied things. She conferred her gift, to all appearance with feelings of a higher order and more worthy to endure, than many of those early impressions which are usually made upon the infantile heart. Another child, when about the same age, having become accustomed to hear much of charitable societies, associated the idea of a formal social meeting only with that of working for the poor, instruction or worship, closely connected all these objects with the common duties of life, and had already begun to cut paper patterns for garments for the needy. Once after walking about a crowded room, she turned and said—"Mother, I'm tired of being at the 'Society." This indicated her presumption that there was no such thing practised as large assemblages of people without some object of evident use. And would it not be of great use to children to have such ideas implanted, and fostered by example?

## CHAPTER XV.

### VARIOUS TOPICS.

System—Honesty—Punctuality in paying debts—Independence—  
Illustration—Caution to wealthy parents—Book-keeping—Public  
offices—Servants—Terrifying children.

It is of great importance that the father present a good example in regard to comfort in all his habits of living, foresight and regularity in providing for his family, cheerfulness and uniformity of temper, good manners, correct language, and fair principles of dealing. From such examples, however humble be the circumstances in which they are exhibited, the child will more probably imbibe corresponding habits, than from any other method of teaching—habits of vast importance in life, and of incomparably superior value to everything which wealth and honor can bestow.

Let your children be sometimes present while you are making purchases, especially of persons of a different manner of life from your own. They may learn more of the father's principles of dealing, from witnessing a bargain for a load of wood or a basket of eggs, than from listening to ever so many lessons on honesty, or reading all the books he may place in their hands. Some children, with too much reason, think their parents have one system of morals for pro-

fession, and another for practice. This is in fact sometimes the best construction that not only judgment but charity can put upon inconsistencies which pass under their eyes.

*Punctuality in paying debts* : how important is this practice, under all considerations ! How many a loose principle has grown out of its neglect ; how many an honest man been disappointed and distressed through means of it ; how many sons have made bad calculations, and have grown improvident, extravagant, and regardless of the rights of others ; how many have sacrificed respectability, comfort, the reputation if not the character of honesty ; how many have been ruined, who might trace it all to the bad example shown them in youth. A delay of payment beyond the time expressed or understood in the bargain, if willingly done, or through want of proper precaution or self-denial, when viewed aright, includes the principle of dishonesty, and should be so regarded. Let there be no relaxation, no want of decision on this subject : it may be the undoing of a child. It is true that in some instances a bad example may work its own counteraction ; but this is not to be often expected. A man who was in possession of about sixty thousand dollars, which he had acquired by industry, honesty and economy, once said, that he learnt to keep out of debt by witnessing the miseries to which his father reduced himself by want of punctuality in paying ; and to this resolution he attributed his success in life.

*A love of honest independence*, is a quality which no child can be safely deprived of. It will act in many ways in which none but a close observer will be likely to detect it. It will influence one favorably in the selection of companions, in fixing habits of independent thought, of industry and economy ; it will habituate him to entertain correct views of things, according to their comparative importance ; and, in whatever circumstances he is placed, will lay the foundations of comfort, respectability and happiness, for himself and his family. The consistent conduct of a man who lives on this principle, is of real value in society. He should be respected for it, and made an object of particular regard to our children.

How easy it would be for any of us sometimes to give the following direction to conversation in our families.—We may suppose that little John gives us an opportunity to introduce, by saying :

“Father, I never saw so coarse a coat as Mr. Wheatfield had on to-day.”

“Well, my son, it is a very warm one ; I saw it myself. What did you think about when you saw it ?”

“Why, father, Henry laughed at him for it. I didn’t laugh, sir, because you tell me never to laugh at people ; but I thought it was a very strange looking one.”

“Well, my son, it is a little strange ; but. Mr. Wheatfield has a very good reason for wearing it. I’ll tell you something now that is worth hearing. Listen. There is a man who works very hard every day on a farm, and brings potatoes and many other things to sell to get money to pay for clothes, food,

books, &c. for his children. He sometimes can hardly get money enough to pay for what he wants, but he never will get any thing unless he can pay for it : for he says that he would rather get along with a little, if it is his own, than use what does not belong to him. He says nothing belongs to him till he has paid for it. For fear that he should not be able to lay up a little money every year to be prepared against sickness or death, or that he should not have it in his power to pay for something necessary, he generally wears clothes which cost but little. That man is Mr. Wheatfield ; and this is the reason why he had that coarse coat on to-day. Now tell me, which is more respectable, a person who does all this with these feelings, or one who wears a fine coat which he has not paid for, and has taken no pains to pay for ? Which would you rather be like ?”

The habitual exercise of sound judgment and good common sense, with independence, especially where moral considerations are concerned, is a most important thing. Let the father show its practical value, as occasions present themselves ; and let him often think aloud, on particular subjects, to accustom his children to the process : as, if he have promised to meet a person, and is told that he may excuse himself for failing to do so : he can say—“ He thinks I promised it ; if I do not perform it, he will think I have broken my word. Besides, he may have put himself to much inconvenience to meet me—now what ought I to do ? Why, certainly, I must do as I said.”

*Expectations of inheriting wealth*, have proved ruinous to not a few children, and of lasting injury to

many. It is generally more difficult to train the children of wealthy parents to habits of humility, study, economy and industry, than those of the poor. The utmost care must be used to inculcate just views of property. But how can this be done by the father, if he keeps up the pursuit of money like an endless fox chase, and every day is as much excited as a hound at the view-holloa?

Moderation in the estimate, use and pursuit of wealth, a humble and cheerful submission to every loss, an habitual preparation for those changes of fortune to which all are liable in our country, and of which we have so many examples, occasional remarks to and before one's children on its uncertainty, its insufficiency to confer happiness, its immeasurable inferiority to the enjoyments of good books, friends, Christian society, and above all, communion with God and the enjoyments of heaven:—by these means, far more than by any course of instruction, command, or harsh measures, the child may be guarded against those lamentable, those ruinous effects, which too often flow from an early education among wealth, pride, ignorance, and indolence. I would place in their true contrast before the eyes of the young, the superior value of those virtues we often find in humble life, where the widow and fatherless are not denied the richest blessings of a Christian and enlightened society.

*Book-keeping.* Children should be early instructed in keeping accounts, as one means for rendering them economical and prosperous in life. The principles of

this art are so reasonable, and the results of its practice so satisfactory, that while it renders one methodical, it may contribute to his amusement. A boy or girl should have a certain sum of money to spend by the week, month, or year, according to the age, if the parent be able to appropriate it, or else should have some branch of care or labor by which property would be produced: and in all the disposal of it should be required to keep an accurate account. Whatever the child has, he should be taught to regard a portion of it as regularly and unreservedly due to some benevolent object; and in giving charity a child should always have to practise some self-denial. He should give of his own, and thus deprive himself of something. It should not be merely his father giving through his hands, for it will not be his own gift.

The keeping of an account of expenses and receipts will afford many opportunities for questions and suggestions on the proper use of money, the tendency of industry, foresight, economy, &c. &c.; the way to avoid poverty, the real value of property, its abuses, and many other subjects, in which children should be well initiated, to save them from pride and extravagance on the one side, and from indolence, carelessness and dishonesty on the other.

*Public Offices.* The good parent will feel peculiarly solicitous to guard his sons against that petty ambition for distinction, which public offices excite in some men. He will wish by all means to guard against consequences so fatal to peace and to character, as those which have often followed the indul-

gence of this passion. As offices are open to persons of all classes in our country, it should be regarded as a general duty to prepare the young to exercise discrimination, and to prefer good men, and at the same time to be ever on their guard against the fascinations by which they may be tempted.

The father may occupy a public office ; in that case he will need to take peculiar care, in order to show his children with what disinterestedness, virtue and humility an important trust may be executed. If he possess the stern integrity without which he has no business with public affairs, the display of it to his children will give the impression of a faithful magistrate, and tend to render them good citizens. The seeking of office for any selfish end should never be approved : the public interests should be spoken of as of great and solemn import, and vastly transcending any private concern. The character of a good magistrate should be dwelt upon, and honored : while the paltry and corrupt politician and office-seeker, should be held up in contrast, with contempt and detestation. The character and life of Washington should be familiar with every child, particularly every boy, in the United States. They should be taught to recount the story of his receiving the appointment of General in Chief from the Congress at Philadelphia without solicitation, and his declaring that he did not think himself worthy of so great a trust. They should also be able to narrate an account of his prevailing on the army at Newburgh to disband at the close of the war without their pay, and his resignation of his commission. In all these deeds he

should be praised as a real hero, and should be placed in contrast with bloody conquerors on the one hand, and on the other with the false-hearted, selfish deceivers of their countrymen, who will even use language like his without a single one of his noble and patriotic feelings. How rich an opportunity may the father here find, to show how the purest patriotism flows from the spirit of Christianity ; and how glorious is that religion which, with one simple doctrine, that of pure love to God and men, would lead us to our own happiness in this world and the next, and make us the best friends of each other.

*Servants.* One most fertile source of injury to children is found in servants. I was going to say *bad* servants : but much harm is done in education by ignorant, careless, superstitious, ill-educated servants, who are not vicious, but often well disposed and even conscientious. We find the ill effects of the influence of servants chiefly among the rich : to such a degree, indeed, that I doubt not many a parent has desired that his children might if possible be educated where there are none. Intercourse with servants in early life often forms bad habits in manners and conversation, and, what is of far greater importance, in modes of thinking, reasoning, feeling and acting, which long continue, often even through life. The indolence and dissipation generally attendant on wealth, cannot be viewed in a more painful light, than with respect to their influence upon children, whom they greatly deprive of the society of their parents, and often render that society, while they have it, in some respects useless if not positively injurious. The

interesting duties of the parent, to whom the child has been solemnly entrusted, for high and important objects, are turned over to a servant, often unknown, hastily confided in, and permitted to transfer to the minds and hearts of the neglected offspring the habits and sentiments of some of the most degraded, and too often vicious states of society—I had almost said in the world. Now can a feeling parent, not to say a pious father or mother, submit to such things? Ah, whoever asks such a question knows but little of the influence of fashion and vanity, or the force of the currents of society when they have once been yielded to.

If parents in humble life could realize the blessing of being free from exposures of this kind, they would find room for much gratitude. Whatever some may think, however wide may appear to them the distance between a master or mistress and a servant, I may challenge any fair, experienced observer to say, whether it would not be better for children, to be entirely shut up from intercourse with such domestics as those with whom some of them are brought into contact. There are still many families in different parts of the country, in which there are no servants. Indeed there are whole communities and districts, in which their place is supplied by members of the family, or neighbors of known character, without any apprehension of degradation. Happy for children is the state of society where no house and no apartment of it is invaded by a single offspring of degradation, intellectual or moral; where all are dependant on a good personal character for influence and importance; where the high respect the opinion of the low, and

the low feel that no artificial or impassable barrier separates the classes of society.

It is a simple fact, that many of the greatest men our country has produced were educated in a society of this kind ; and several considerations combine to show us its advantages. While on the one hand the character of domestic servants has extensively depreciated in our cities, in some of our country towns a scarcity has been caused by the opportunity afforded by manufactories to pursue a course of life less irksome to the feelings. If we would have good domestics, we must not degrade them too low. Happy those families where any progress has been made to raise the character of domestic labor. To those in whom this subject has not attracted attention, I may propose to reflect seriously upon it, at least, for the sake of their children. Servants feel as you would feel in similar circumstances, and may be induced to serve with gratitude and esteem. A little kindly intercourse may do more to secure faithful labor and care than any amount of harshness or fault-finding.

One of the most friendly offices that can be done for servants, is to give them the means of making daily improvement in useful knowledge ; and every point gained in elevating the lowest grade of any community is an advantage to all who belong to it. The more intelligence, virtue and attachment we can collect around our children, the better ; and those who can delegate their duties, when it is necessary, to trusty hands, may consider themselves happy. A servant who possesses these qualities should be highly valued, and treated with respect and gratitude.

When such relations begin to subsist between a master and a domestic, the distance between them begins to be lessened, and a tendency towards that identity of interests which alone can make a family one.

There are many families in which entire confidence cannot be placed in the characters or intelligence of the domestics ; and then an improper familiarity is by no means recommended : but they should always be treated with kindness, should be provided with all necessaries, offered useful opportunities and means of instruction, particularly in religion ; permitted, or rather required to attend family worship ; allowed to go to church at least once on every Sabbath, and saved all except necessary labor on that day. The following general rules for the treatment of domestics may also be recommended :

1. Have the work of each distinctly understood.
2. Occasionally perform some of their duties in their presence, in such a manner as to show that the task is not regarded by you as degrading.
3. Never be passionate, nor use the tone of command ; and never permit them to use disrespectful language. Avoid giving them any unnecessary irritation ; and reason with them kindly against any bad habit you may perceive in them.
4. Permit no ardent spirit to be brought into the house.
5. Let them see that you know what property is left in their way, and that you would probably discover if any thing were gone. Never leave money, jewels, or other small and valuable articles, in

their way. You might thus tempt an honest person to commit a crime. By unjustifiable carelessness on such subjects, also, many an unjust suspicion has been harbored, and perhaps procured many a hasty expulsion of an innocent domestic without a recommendation, and with a risk of ruin.

"I have lost some money," said a person in much agitation, one day, "and you," (speaking to a domestic,) "must have taken it—give it up then at once!" The girl appeared thunderstruck; but protested her innocence. Her whole appearance was attributed to guilt, and measures were proposed for securing her at least until the money might be recovered; when a closer inspection by the loser discovered the money where it had been deposited. To beg pardon, or even weep at the injury, is very easy: but every body has not consideration and system enough, to guard against such exposures by keeping every temptation out of the way of domestics.

Children also should be taught to treat domestics with kindness, and never be allowed to *command* them to perform a piece of service. Our own manner of speaking to a domestic, will be the best mode of teaching our children in this respect. It will be well also to explain to them their obligations to treat not only domestics, but every person in a different rank in life from themselves, with courtesy. Many works upon education, and the domestic relation, of English origin, contain directions with regard to servants not applicable to the state of things in this country.

*Terrifying children.* This is sometimes practised by domestics and others, either to secure obedience, or as

a punishment, or perhaps from a mere love of sport. Parents should be warned against permitting their children's fears to be excited by any influence of the imagination. I have taken the pains to get the following statement from a person who may be depended on for accuracy.

“I was fond of reading at the age of five, and many years after ; but I have often thought that I should have been much more useful and happy through the early part of my life, if the opposite had been the fact. One of my first books was “Bluebeard ;” and the very name brings back the leading scenes of that frightful story, with the sufferings they caused me by long acting upon my fears, though I have not read it, I believe, in thirty years. My parents thought my unwillingness to go to bed alone was owing to some whim, or proceeded merely from a childish desire to stay up longer ; but by compelling me to it they made me undergo indescribable distress. I do not believe that a man would undergo greater terrors if imprisoned an equal time in the Inquisition, with the expectation of being every moment put to death by torture, than I often endured at that time. I remember the place where I lay, the horror with which I looked at a closet near me and fancied it the “Blue Chamber,” the agitation caused by every sound, and the total extinguishment of every joy and every hope, as I lay in my nightly tremor, enduring sufferings which I could not describe for want of knowledge and of language. As this trial recurred every evening, and my daily thoughts often anticipated its return with a shudder, I doubt not that my nerves were greatly shocked.”

“The reading of highly wrought fictions in subsequent years, was also injurious to me by exciting terror, as well as other feelings little if at all less improper. Frightful scenes in Fairy Tales, the Arabian-Nights, some of the old novels, and other books, often agitated my feelings for a long time; and I have still reason to regret the associations which frequently bring them to my memory.”

No doubt many other persons might confirm these opinions, as well as testify to the danger of permitting the fears of children to be excited by others. The evil which we have most to apprehend from the intercourse between our children and domestics, after bad principles and immoral practices, perhaps is that they will be frightened, about imaginary beings. Many of the ignorant, even those who are virtuous, have some superstition concerning spirits; and many find it easy to make children do as they please by exciting their fears, as an ignorant or indolent schoolmaster resorts to emulation or blows, because they cost him less than systematic management and wise instructions. An excellent mother once told her little son that a man servant of whom he had seemed extravagantly fond, had been dismissed. This he at first heard without emotion, and appeared scarcely to believe it; but when he had satisfied himself that he was never to return, he expressed the utmost pleasure. He then informed his mother that he had long practised a course of deception towards her, for the servant had terrified him with stories of a spirit, which he said would kill him if he did not obey his commands, and thus compelled him to do whatever he

wished. It was long before the child's mind recovered from the influence of this state of terror.

During the absence of the heads of a family from home, some years since, a servant undertook to frighten a younger domestic who was addicted to falsehood, thinking it would correct her bad propensity. She therefore appeared in the evening, in a terrific disguise, in the midst of the children while at their sports; but instead of effecting any good, she well nigh destroyed the reason of one of the children, who was unable, for some time afterwards, ever to go into a dark room alone, so strongly was the scene impressed upon his mind, and so much had terror affected his nerves. He was before as bold as boys commonly are; but this fright for a time entirely changed his character. The horror he sometimes exhibited made him an object of compassion to his friends, who felt, what was probably true, that little more would have been necessary to unsettle his mind for life.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SCHOOLS.

Their importance to the peace and good order of the neighborhood and society—Sending children to public schools—A father's duty towards them—General principles to be observed in establishing and conducting schools—Branches to be taught, and principles of teaching—Ornamental branches—Modes of government and instruction—Means of exciting interest in schools—Lyceums—Conclusion.

EVERY intelligent parent must be sensible that his own personal interest, and the good of his children, are closely connected with the flourishing condition of schools around him. They are nurseries of good order and public morals, and have a favorable influence on every thing valuable in society. Children are necessarily affected by the habits, manners and opinions of those around them; and after the few first years it is impossible to confine them entirely to the family circle. The more exalted and pure the tone of society is, then, the more favorable will it be to our children, and to our exertions for their benefit. It has been remarked, that if all parents were as wise and good as they should be, schools would not be needed: while however they are generally so far from being good instructors of their children, schools must continue to be institutions of prime necessity. On

this subject no parent can remain indifferent without neglecting what is of great importance to himself and his family, as well as to the community around him.

But schools, that they may do much good, must be well managed ; and this they cannot be by vicious or incompetent teachers. One of the poorest pieces of economy practised in our country, but one of the most common, is the payment of insufficient wages to teachers. It prevents them from devoting proper attention to their business, and from remaining in the profession longer than they are compelled to do so. It discourages persons of education and talents, from becoming instructors, and causes frequent changes of systems and books, as well as of teachers. A bad plan of instruction, or improper treatment, often disgusts children with learning, discourages them, or excites bad passions ; and the evil consequences may long be felt. The manners and opinions of a whole school may be unfavorably affected by similar causes ; and we might as well expect to plunge our children in a filthy stream without defiling them, as to have them mingle with a corrupt or debased society without infection.

But the intelligent father will not make his own interest or that of his family the only standard in such a case. A good parent is almost of course a sound and enlightened patriot, and will think it no gratuity to the country to which he owes many blessings, if he bestows time, labor or money, for the support of schools—institutions on which must rest one of the corner stones of the land he inhabits. On this, as on other important subjects, great independence of mind

may be necessary, to enable one to act with efficiency and perseverance. But whatever be the common opinions or fashions in relation to it, the father must be guided by his own perception of the nature of the object, and determine to do his part for the support of institutions so indispensable. Indeed, the greater the public indifference, the greater will be the need of his exertions, his early devotion to the object, and his persevering prosecution of it.

The question will arise to many parents, whether they shall or shall not send their children to the common schools. While there may be objections to this course in some cases, it may be questioned whether the withdrawing of children from those institutions, will not be attended with evils yet greater and more seriously to be deprecated. In some parts of the country, most happily, where the people are peculiarly intelligent and moral, all parents freely allow their children to intermingle at school; and the benefits are very perceptible: for feelings of equality and harmony are cultivated, and the manners of one portion are not injurious to those of another; while the interest and influence of society are concentrated, instead of being divided between rival institutions. Still, the parent must not hazard the perversion of his children's instructions and character.

It will be important to a father to bear in mind a few practical truths, when called to act in favor of public instruction.

1. However defective a school may be, a good teacher may soon make it equal to almost any in the world.

2. If proper means be used for the improvement of schools, and with success, it may be expected that those parents who are most interested will perceive and acknowledge the benefit.

3. Even if a person does not obtain all the success he desires, or finds his labors underrated or opposed, he is doing good at least to the young, who derive permanent, though unacknowledged, advantage from his labors.

I may throw in briefly here a few general principles in relation to schools, which may serve as convenient hints to some persons who have not had much experience in different systems, and may have opportunities to improve those around them. We may first speak of Branches of knowledge to be taught; secondly, Modes of teaching, and discipline; and thirdly, Means of exciting interest in schools.

### I. *Branches of Knowledge.*

Make sure of the most important first: then, if you have the means and opportunity, take the next most valuable, &c. I would have a school always opened with reading a chapter in the Bible, and a short prayer, or singing a hymn. A few simple questions on familiar moral duties should then be asked: such as—"How should we treat our parents—brothers and sisters—teachers—neighbors? What is honesty?—of what use is it? Of what use are schools?" &c. &c. Religion and morality, the most important branches, would thus be acknowledged as such, and, in a degree, taught in school; but as they

must be presumed to be taught at home, at church, and at Sabbath School, they should not occupy much of the time at a common school.

So far as "going up" in classes is practised, let the "circulating system" be used: that is, draw up the class nearly in a circle, and when a child has reached the head by correct answers, let him be asked any question missed by the one at the foot, and change places with him if he answers it. This will prevent injurious emulation, and encourage the ignorant, young and diffident.

Avoid bad tones in *reading*; read moderately loud, and as if talking. *Writing* is best taught to children of three, four and five, in sand—afterwards on slates, with an hour or two in a week on paper, the copies being at first painted large on the walls or boards. (This system renders the writing in the New York public schools excellent.) *Arithmetic* should be at first familiarly taught with tangible objects, and afterwards calculations should be often made without writing the figures, that is, by mental arithmetic. *English Grammar* and the principles of the language may go far to supply the place of foreign languages: *Geography* may be entered upon by telling the boundaries of a neighboring field, (or the room,) then of another, next of the town, county, &c. The form of the ground should be spoken of, the ponds or streams, the trees or crops, climate, animals, stones, dwellings, inhabitants, agriculture, roads, arts, manufactures, &c. Even the laws, history, customs and manners, may be familiarly conversed on: and if an hour or more in a week be devoted to such a system

of teaching geography to the whole school, (as is sometimes done,) the interest in the lesson will be general. Having learnt the names of different forms of land and water, natural and civil divisions, &c. immediately around them, the children will have a solid foundation on which to build their future acquisitions in these important subjects, far more distinct and just than if they began with foreign regions and objects, or the world's great divisions ; and their subsequent improvement will probably be much more real and lasting. Large maps, correct enough to be very useful, may be drawn upon the wall, if it should be found too expensive to procure better ; and the exercise of copying these, even on slates, will be highly improving.

*Astronomy*, an ennobling science, can be sufficiently taught without much interfering with the preceding more practical branches. Only the names, appearances, distances, order, motions, and sizes of the principal planets, need be taught in a common school, and this is soon done, especially with the aid of an orrery. Most other parts of astronomy, after the general illustrations of day and night, eclipses, &c., may be dispensed with. The mind will not long retain the vast sizes and distances, orbits, periods, &c. and this must not be expected.

*Apparatus* may be purchased for ten, fifteen or more dollars, according to size, &c. which will prove of great use in aiding and shortening study, and making schools attractive. Money can hardly be better laid out ; and a liberal man should take plea-

sure in making such cheap but valuable presents to public schools.

As for *ornamental branches*, there is nothing which I would recommend, in any department of education, which I would degrade with such a name. Education should be useful from beginning to end. Usefulness should be the measure, the standard, at every step and on every subject. I would have the decision in every case made by a competent judge; for it is often impossible for a person ignorant of any particular branch of knowledge to form a correct idea of its value. I confess, however, that close observers, and persons of good common sense, can often discriminate very justly, when they have had opportunities to see the tendency of such things in actual life. Dancing, drawing and music, are of doubtful utility, as they are frequently taught.

## 2. *Modes of Instruction and Government.*

Such in general are to be pursued as treat children like moral and rational beings, and are founded on principles applicable to human nature. Force will never introduce an unintelligible idea into the understanding, though some harsh instructors seem to regard it as an effectual instrument. Who has not seen the rod applied, threats, frowns, ridicule and what not, to make a child comprehend what was so presented to him that he could not understand it. Who that has ever been so treated, does not know, that the effects produced were quite the opposite to those aimed at.

A great secret lies in making a judicious division

of time in schools, and in establishing a proper succession of exercises. The least laborious studies should generally come last, in warm weather. No study should be prolonged beyond the time when it necessarily begins to lose its interest to the mind of a youth.

The daily practice of vocal music for five or ten minutes will powerfully aid discipline and instruction.

Manners, so extensively neglected in these days, should be carefully inculcated by habit and example. They form a safe outer enclosure to the character.

It is a good rule to keep the feelings of children in a placid, undisturbed state. Almost every kind of excitement is unfavorable to study, as well as to moral training. It is followed by languor, and often in the end less real progress is made in a day or a week than would have been made without it. There are some kinds of excitement however much more deleterious than others. Emulation—rivalry in studies, is a most dangerous motive to present to a child. It fosters selfish and bad passions, which will necessarily render himself and others unhappy. It is better to have a child make but little progress in learning for a year or more, than to be stimulated through many books by this principle. He might waste time in the former case : but in the latter he would be forming moral habits incompatible with the character of a good or a happy man—habits which must at all events be rooted out before he could become a consistent Christian, or act disinterestedly in any thing. Children should have knowledge presented to them in an agreeable form, dressed in its own native attractions, and in intelligible language. The application of what they are

taught to some useful purpose in life should be occasionally shown ; and thus they should pursue their studies under the laudable and harmless impulses of duty to God, their parents and the world, and the relish of learning. Affectionate manners, with the mild but firm exercise of authority, and a warm interest in each personally, will do more in a month to make a school flourish, than threats, frowns, complaints and punishments, can effect in a year.

It is a great principle in teaching, to seize favorable opportunities, and on proper occasions to yield to circumstances. When children are fresh in the morning, good humored and prepared for study, set them promptly at their most difficult tasks ; but then, as always, give them what they can accomplish. When they show symptoms of weariness or listlessness, give them exercise, change their attitudes or studies, or let them lay aside their books and listen to an interesting address.

The best instrument of discipline in the world, is the frequent sight and society of a well regulated family. And the want of this advantage in early life, nothing can fully supply : on the contrary, the highest external advantages, without its influence, often prove unavailing. With these views the establishment of a good family system in many of its details, but especially in its great principles, is presented as a prominent, a fundamental object, in this book.

Providence has made many wise provisions in the family, that out of this his universal institution may be made to grow the most perfect system of government, and instruction. A good family is a nursery,

as well as a model, for a State, no less than for a school. Experienced teachers often prefer first to initiate a few pupils into their systems, and then to increase the number by degrees, that they may ever keep the mass of influence in their favor. An unruly class may be most effectually prevented from injuring a school, by dividing its members among other classes. The members of a family are one by one introduced into the domestic circle, that they may singly receive its influences, write a transcript of the general character upon their own hearts, and amalgamate with the rest before a successor appears.

Let this principle of sympathy be applied as circumstances may render it convenient. An untutored and almost outcast boy, was once brought into a school from the street of a city, for the first time. After standing a few minutes and surveying a number of happy, silent and obedient children at their tasks, he seemed to lose his wild looks and disposition for the time, and to become like one of them. Children should generally be so placed in school as not to face each other, unless they be too distant to convey their roguish feelings by looks and gestures. When, however, any pleasing exercise is to be engaged in, and the kindly feelings are likely to be excited, they may face each other with advantage. They should be kept under the eye of a teacher, if possible, during their sports, and precautions should be taken to prevent too violent games, and any improper language. Those who would set bad examples should be separated from the rest, and denied some common favor until they

improve. The influence of bad examples is to be most cautiously prevented.

### 3. *Means of exciting interest in Schools.*

While the public, and even the intelligent and influential, remain as indifferent as they now generally are in our country to the condition of common education, little improvement can be looked for in our schools. The time is probably fast hastening, when this highly important subject will receive a portion of that attention which it merits, and be placed beside some others which are quite in advance of it in public favor. In the mean time, however, it is the more necessary for such persons as realize anything of their duty, to make prompt and persevering exertions, at least in their own districts. A little union, a little combination in favor of common education, may effect something useful anywhere. In some places it has done much. Perhaps no plan has been devised, better calculated for the object of diffusing knowledge rapidly, thoroughly and economically, than by Lyceums. This word, as now understood, embraces every kind of voluntary associations for this purpose: whether library companies, debating societies, periodical meetings of teachers or other friends of knowledge, societies for providing public lectures, &c. Of course they are applicable, under some form or other, to every community in our country; and, by correspondence with each other, may indefinitely extend their spheres and their benefits.

Every individual may find some means of increasing the interest in schools. A few dollars will supply a valuable apparatus, a few words will encourage a

teacher, an occasional visit will gratify the children ; and the more influence a man has, the more careful he should be to throw it into the useful scale. A public man should blush to be thought indifferent to so fundamental an interest of the commonwealth. Editors should devote a portion of their columns to it. Parents should lay deep the foundations of a love for knowledge and its institutions in their families.

---

### *Conclusion.*

At the close of this volume, the author would once more remark, that he has not attempted to embrace all the branches of his fertile subject, nor even all those which are of truly great importance. He has chiefly endeavored to present with truth and distinctness some of those which he considered of fundamental consequence, and most liable to be misunderstood. Though he cannot hope to effect that general and thorough change in education which he thinks necessary to the good of the country, and indeed to our existence as a free, intelligent and virtuous nation, he desires that through the suggestions he here presents, at least some few parents may be led to adopt sound principles in training their children, that some firesides may feel their happy influence, that some family circles may enjoy the harmony, peace, purity and exaltation which they are calculated to confer, and that the next generation may in consequence be enriched with at least a few more healthful frames, sound minds, laborious hands, virtuous, warm philan-

thropic and Christian characters. To such principles our country owes the pure, and simple, but exalted state of society established by our ancestors, in which our free institutions had their birth; and without them we shall become incapable of enjoying, unworthy and unable to retain them. By a proper regard for these principles, with a just estimate of the peculiar, the superior advantages for bringing them into general practice which are afforded by our situation and state of society, any father in this land, may confer on his children blessings innumerable and incalculable; while such as possess extensive influence, by coöperation and perseverance, might bestow on their country a worth and a character which would render it the admiration of mankind. No rubies or diamonds in the richest mines are susceptible of a polish to be compared with that which a pure, virtuous and Christian education can confer upon the human character; and all earthly possessions and objects of enjoyment we should habitually regard as of contemptible importance when contrasted with the value of the soul.

And now, in concluding this volume, let me say to the father who may have followed me through its pages, that its design of making him better qualified properly to discharge the duties of the interesting relation he sustains, will not be answered, unless he gives the suggestions contained in it serious consideration. Have you sufficiently realized, that the character of your children is to be formed, almost entirely, with the blessing of God, by the training you shall give them? Have you seriously reflected upon the

best means of influencing them, so as to give a right direction to their views and feelings? You doubtless love your children. You wish to have them virtuous, intelligent, respected and happy. As you look upon the little band around you, you feel a strong anxiety concerning their future destiny. Especially are you desirous, that the characters they are forming shall be such as to fit them for the pure and holy enjoyments of a better world. Seek, then, the blessing of Him who has given your children to you, and who can best aid you in training them for Himself. And forget not, what has already been urged upon you, that your own conduct will teach more effectually than any other means you can adopt, and that, if you would see your children "walking in the truth," and preparing for Heaven, you must, by your own example,

"Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way."



*Erratum.*

Page 21, 5th line from bottom, for *entering*, read *erecting*.

3477 5











LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 006 020 998 4